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AUTUMN 1978

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The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Editor: Helen Burgess

AUTUMN 1978
OUTFIT 309:2
$1.50

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COVER: The mountains behind Arctic Bay on north Baffin Island. Water-colour by Frederick H. Varley painted in the summer of 1938 (see page 54). Reproduced by courtesy of Mrs H. A. Dyde.

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE
77 MAIN ST.

Hudson's Bay Company
INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

WINNIPEG, CANADA
R3C 2R1

Published by The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, known as the Hudson's Bay Company. The interests of THE BEAVER cover the territory with which the Company has been or is now associated. Annual subscription $5; three years for $12; single copy $1.50. In the United States and other countries annual subscription $6; three years $15. While every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations submitted, no liability will be assumed for loss. Contents copyright. Printed in Canada.

Second class mail registration number 1401. Postage paid at Winnipeg.

1978 Hudson's Bay Company

ISSN 0005-7517

Donald A. Smith and Governor George Simpson

By W. L. Morton

DONALD ALEXANDER SMITH was born in 1820, the second of two sons in the family of Alexander Smith and Barbara Stuart. His mother's ardent desire for her sons to improve their lot led to the elder, John, being sent at severe cost to the family to the University of Aberdeen. He emerged as a doctor of medicine and as such, he was to have a useful but undistinguished career as a military doctor in India. Donald, more clever, more sensitive, more alert, could not be sent to Aberdeen. He had to begin his life in the little town of Forres. There were to be signs through his life that he was a doctor or a scholar *manqué*. Nor was he in many important ways ever to be a businessman, systematic and closely calculating. He was in fact a dreamer, a beholder of visions, a bold thinker in the large. He was bound to seek what Forres could not give him: a career open to adventure and to talent. It was a great good fortune to have been born early in the nineteenth century, the century of free enterprise, and to serve the Hudson's Bay Company in its competitive area, the Montreal Department.

When he could not endure an apprenticeship to the Forres lawyer and man of business, Robert Watson, he sought the aid of relatives in the fur trade to get a post in Canada, either in the Hudson's Bay Company or the land business of Upper Canada. His uncle, John Stuart, wrote to George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in British North America, and Simpson wrote on Smith's behalf to James Keith, manager of the Montreal Department in which there was a coming vacancy.

'You will hear' he said, 'of a very promising, well-educated young man Donald Smith from Mr. James McKenzie, [the Company's agent in Quebec City] if he is willing to accept the appointment, you will be pleased to let him have it; on the contrary you may give it to any other of whom you think favorably.' Thus Smith, contrary to what has been said, entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company with the knowledge and blessing of George Simpson.

Nor is there any suggestion in the Company's records of any friction between these two, or harsher treatment of Smith by Simpson. These statements, it would seem, may be set aside as fur-trade gossip and yarning, of which the early biographers of Smith are so full. Certainly there is no record of Smith being at Lachine when Simpson returned there some weeks after Smith had arrived from England. Simpson invited caricature, so powerful was his position and his personality, and little said of him is to be taken literally.

It is probable, if not established, that Donald Smith was sent at once as apprentice clerk to Tadoussac on the lower St Lawrence. There in 1832, the Hudson's Bay Company had leased the King's Posts: fur-trading posts controlled by the French Crown before 1760, and by the English Crown thereafter. It also leased to the east of the area of the King's Posts, the Seigniory of Mingan, also held by the Crown. The lease confirmed the right to trade in those areas from established posts. The Company had no monopoly, and competition was lively.

From 1838 to 1844 Smith was listed as being at Tadoussac, but he, no doubt, frequently served in outlying posts. In the first four years of this seven-year engagement Smith gave satisfaction. His salary, beginning at £20 a year, increased yearly, and in 1842, he was re-engaged as a clerk at £100 a year.

In all this there was little of remark in the record. But from 1842 he began to visit Quebec City on his own, as well as Company business — something slightly unusual and remarked, although apparently not resented. And in 1843 he sent a present of cranberries and salmon to Simpson himself, not an unusual practice in the country, but perhaps slightly daring for one so junior a clerk in the hierarchy.

Smith might be a bit daring in his relations with the great man, but a career in the Montreal Department, if it were not to be merely one of routine advancement, called for some daring. The Montreal Department was a wholly competitive one. Its fur trade was carried on in direct competition with local traders and often in proximity to settlement or, at least, to lumber camps. It was, after all, the coalition's inheritance from the North West Company, the competitors of fur-trade history. None of the posts in the Montreal Department (with the exception of Fort Chimo) was Charter territory. The Company had no rights in the Montreal Department, and had no right of monopoly of trade. It was one competitor among others. The most surprising thing about this is that the fact has not been remarked by historians of the Company. It has been, if not ignored, at least taken for granted by them all, even although, after 1836, Lachine, its head office,

In this article Historian W. L. Morton gives a fresh interpretation to the relationship between Donald A. Smith (later First Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal) and George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in North America. Professor Morton, now retired from Trent University and teaching a course on fur-trade history at the University of Manitoba, is writing a proposed two-volume biography of Donald Smith.

Public Archives of Canada

Donald Smith at North West River, 1860. An oil painting by W. G. R. Hind. For thirty years 'Labrador' Smith managed a profitable trade under competitive conditions in the Company's Montreal Department.

became the head office of George Simpson, the Governor of all three departments: the Northern, the Southern and Montreal.

It was not extent of territory that led to this neglect. The Montreal Department was run directly from Lachine by Simpson and in his absence, the Company officer posted at Lachine. This in the time of Smith's apprenticeship was Chief Factor James Keith. Because of its history, and this direct management, the Montreal Department had no council. Its fur-trade officers did not meet annually to set policy. In this too, the department foreshadowed the Company after the 1870s. The Montreal Department extended westward from Montreal to the Ottawa River, northward to the headwaters of the Ottawa, eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, and again north of Labrador to Ungava Bay. If its trade did not match that of the other departments, it was at least profitable.

It was, then, a standing assertion that with good management, a profitable trade could be driven by the Company even in competition and on the borders of settlement, or in other enterprises such as lumbering, fishing, or sealing. It was a silent rebuttal of those who felt, after the Sayer trial in 1849, that the end of monopoly in the chartered territory must mean the end of a profitable fur trade also.

From his posting to the Montreal Department, then, came the central fact of Smith's career before 1870. For over thirty years he managed and developed a profitable trade under competitive conditions. That career was, of course, an admirable — perhaps an indispensable — preparation for his role in the affairs of the great Company after 1870.

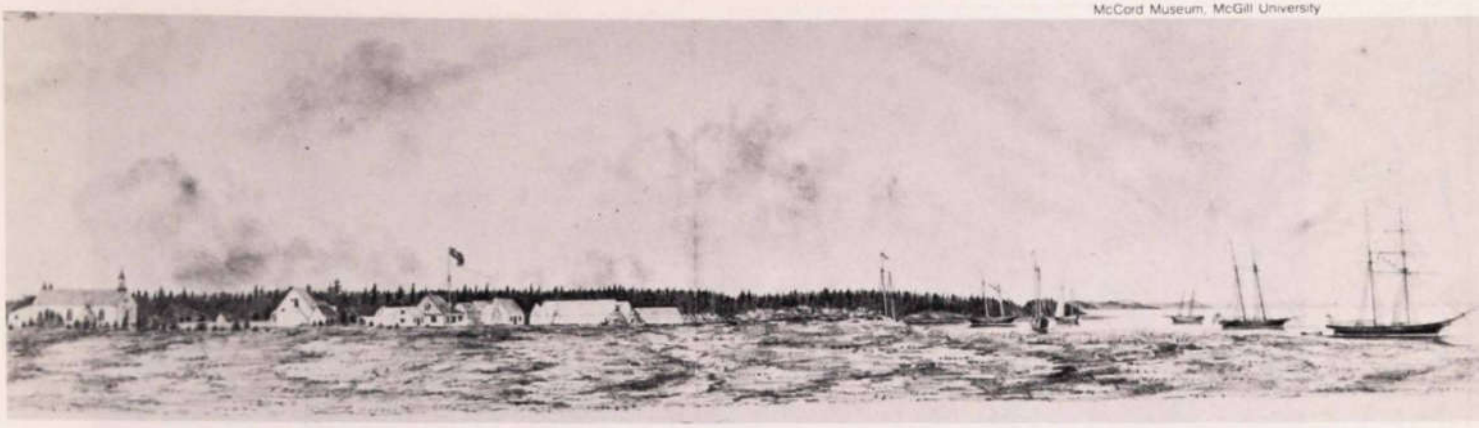
Not only, however, was his experience in the Montreal Department such a preparation. He was also prepared by the active intent, advice, and support of George Simpson himself. Indeed, it is difficult not to see Smith as a protégé of Simpson. Certainly it is impossible not to see Simpson in a much different light than that shed by his reputation, and that given by his biographers.

Late in 1843 or very early in 1844, Smith was placed in charge of the Seigniory of Mingan. This was the most easterly of the Company's posts on the Gulf of St Lawrence; on the eastern borders it abutted on Labrador, and Montagnais Indians trading with Mingan and its farthest east post, Musquarro, travelled northward into country also reached from the Atlantic. In Mingan competition was, if anything, more intense than at Tadoussac and its satellite posts. 'Planters' — settlers out of Newfoundland — traded with the Indian hunters, often with cheaper goods than the Company could provide.

A view in Mingan Harbour, 1859. Smith was placed in charge here late in 1843, or very early in 1844.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives

McCord Museum, McGill University



On his arrival in Canada, Smith was hired as an apprentice clerk and probably sent directly to Tadoussac where, in 1842, when this water-colour was painted, he was advanced to the position of clerk.

The comments of Smith's superiors at Tadoussac and Lachine, George Barnston and Duncan Finlayson, make it clear that he was alert and bold in resisting the competition of the fur traders and the encroachments of interlopers from the Gulf.

Perhaps he was all too active in the discharge of these duties for in the fall of 1844 he was responsible for a delay in sending on the brig *Marten* from Mingan because his accounts were not ready for forwarding. This was serious because the *Marten* was the supply ship for Esquimeaux Bay in Labrador. As such her schedule for the season was tight and Simpson was sensitive to any delay suffered in unloading and loading the supply vessel and passing it on. Smith had incurred the unfavourable notice of the head of the Company with his passionate control of detail and personnel. When, therefore, Simpson visited Mingan in the summer of 1845, he scrutinized the post and its management with his full rigour. He then wrote Smith a letter of criticism, in which he said:

> I am aware of your great anxiety to transact the business entrusted to your charge in a proper manner, & need not, therefore, advert at any great length to the importance of having your business always in such a forward state that no delay be occasioned to any of the vessels in awaiting either cargo or papers. Your counting house department appeared to me in a very slovenly condition, so much so that I could make very little of any document that came under my notice. Your schemes of outposts were really curiously perplexing, & such as I trust I may never see again, while letters, invoices and accounts were to be found tossing about as wastepaper in almost every room in the house. I am aware that during the pressure of summer business, you have not much time to devote to the neat arrangement of papers, but your winters are very long, with little or no, out-door work to occupy your attention, and if you were but to give a few hours a week to the arrangement of your papers your business would be in a very different state to that in which I found it.

It was at first reading a devastating letter, and it must have been a blow to Smith. Yet read again, and especially in the light of what was to follow, it was more a letter of counsel to a junior than one of rebuke or condemnation. It reveals Simpson not just as the hard-driving executive but also as a senior prepared to aid his staff. He had discovered Smith's great weakness, a want of method and system, and he set Smith on the way to remedying a weakness which might have checked his career.

Certainly the letter did not end relations between the two. Nor did other misfortunes prevent Smith from benefiting from Simpson's patience. In 1846 Mingan was burned to the ground, with its supplies and records. At the time, and presumably because of the fire, Smith suffered an accident, one undescribed in the Company records, but apparently one which affected his eyesight. He continued in charge at Mingan, as both Barnston and Finlayson were satisfied with his management, but in mid-1847 he decided to visit Montreal in search of help for his eye trouble, even if doing so meant leaving the service.

The years 1846 and 1847 were, it seemed, years of setback and uncertainty for the career which had begun so well. He continued to administer Mingan but he needed some opportunity outside the routine life of a post to give him a chance to redeem the failures of 1846. It seemed unlikely that he would get such an opportunity. Whether Smith knew it or not, however, he remained in Simpson's regard and under Simpson's eye.

When, therefore, need arose of a winter journey to Labrador with skilled boatmen and a possible replacement for Chief Factor William Nourse of Esquimeaux Bay, Smith was in Montreal and Simpson in January 1848 appointed him to lead the relief expedition. Boatmen were needed to aid in the navigation of the Nascopie River from the Marten country of inland Labrador, and Nourse was unwell, being nearly incapacitated by the loss of the use of an arm. Smith was to help him, and if necessary to take his place. The journey was to be made overland through the King's Posts and Mingan, by Musquaro and the St Augustine River, and overland to the Hamilton Inlet and the North West River Post where Nourse was located.

Montreal c. 1838, the year of Smith's arrival in Canada. From a lithograph of the drawing by Coke Smyth.

This was an opportunity and a challenge, and Simpson meant it as such. Forgotten then was Smith's eye trouble. His letters to Simpson from stopping points enroute were full of excited resolution to get on at all costs.

The party consisted of Smith and James Grant, a young clerk and a connection and friend of Smith's, and three Iroquois boatmen. The journey began at Quebec and went by Tadoussac, Mingan, and on to Musquarro. At Mingan, Smith began to look for an Indian guide to take the party from Musquarro through the wilderness to North West River. Had one been found, the party would have arrived in winter. As none was available, they had to put up at Musquarro until the river opened. They then made the journey by canoe and reached North West River on 27 June 1848. Although so much delayed, the party was in time to take part in the operations of 1848. Smith's fierce pride in having made the journey successfully stands out in the letter to Simpson telling of his arrival. He had made good.

Smith had, in fact, begun his career as 'Labrador' Smith, and he had done so on Simpson's appointment and challenge. In some sense Simpson had made Smith, or at least had dared to give him a chance to prove himself. Smith became at once the mainspring of operations in Esquimeaux Bay, as the district was called. Nourse, he at once saw, had suffered a severe stroke, and he took over until a successor of the necessary rank could be appointed. The boatmen began service on the Nascopie River, and Grant assisted Nourse at North West River. Smith went on to Rigolet near the coast, and there he remained when Chief Factor Richard Hardisty arrived from the Northwest to take over Esquimeaux Bay. Hardisty brought with him his wife and two daughters, and James Grant and Donald Smith, and the other clerks at the posts had the pleasure of their company in the long and isolated Labrador winters.

From this time on and for the next decade Smith and Simpson wrote one another regularly and freely. It was both a business and a personal correspondence, and two aspects of it stand out. One was that Simpson still supervised Smith's advancement; the other concerned the marriage of Isobel Hardisty and James Grant. What Smith's letters to Simpson reveal is that, as a friend of James Grant, he regretted the marriage because he thought the young couple had been hurried into it, presumably by the Hardistys. One daughter had already married the clerk Joseph Macpherson, and on the eve of Hardisty's furlough in 1852 it would be a convenience to have the other daughter married. Grant, in addition, was an attractive person, and had expectations of inheriting some money.

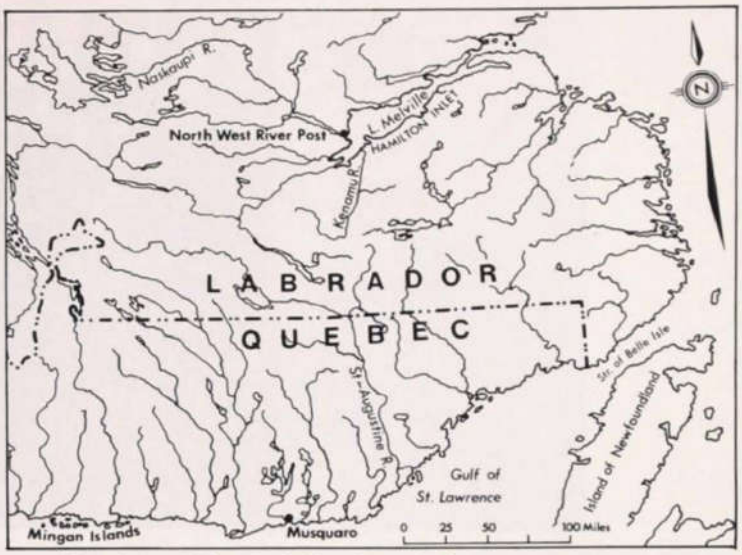
Certainly the marriage was a failure. The couple separated, apparently by mutual consent, almost at once. Mrs Grant, thus left alone, spent the winter of 1852-53 at North West River where Smith was in charge of Esquimeaux Bay as Chief Trader. She continued there until she went to Montreal in 1856.

It was during this period — in March, 1853 — that she and Smith married, beginning the marriage that was to last for so many years. In the Smith-Simpson letters, however, she remained Mrs Grant to Simpson. Yet Simpson must have known what had happened. He recognized the embarrassment of Grant remaining in Esquimeaux Bay, as he did until 1855. In 1857 Simpson paid 'Mrs Grant', living in Montreal, the sum of £40 at the request of Donald Smith. These letters are interesting because they are on such a private and intimate matter, but the final step in confidence could be taken by neither man. Smith presumably was too shy to be open with his senior.

Their other correspondence was largely on business, with some discussion about Simpson's investments of Smith's savings. It extends from 1848 when Smith reached Esquimeaux Bay, to 1852 when he became the officer in charge, and on to 1860, the year of Simpson's death. In it Simpson encourages the ventures, notably in salmon curing, with which Smith sought to increase the profits of the district. It remained the exchange of senior and junior, but Simpson was cordial in tone and clearly took a personal interest in Smith's advancement. In 1855, for example, when Smith asked if it were correct for him to correspond directly with the Hudson's Bay Company in England, Simpson replied it was, but that Smith should make his letters brief, as he had not in one instance.

'When you want to bring any point strongly under notice' he went on, 'it will have a better chance by putting it in a few clear and appropriate words than by spinning out the theme so as to make it look important by the space it occupies on paper.' It was the succinct advice of a master of business correspondence, advice that a high-strung and over-anxious Smith needed. He was to show his gratitude for all Simpson's help by gifts sent down from Labrador, the last, a pair of husky dogs.

In Labrador, Smith found himself in an area of even greater competition than in Mingan. Labrador was not chartered territory and the traders and settlers of Newfoundland were much keener competitors than the hit-and-run traders of the Gulf Shore. Over the years Smith was led to greater and greater competitive efforts. At the same time he was encouraged, as in Mingan, to add to the profits of the fur trade if possible, those of the salmon fishery, with salmon curing and then canning, and of the purchase of seal oil. As in the early days in the Montreal Department, so in its extension into Labrador he was driven step by step into a more competitive field. Labrador, even more than the King's Posts and Mingan, was a preparation for the open trade after 1870.



Donald Smith travelled to North West River via the St-Augustine and Kenamu Rivers.

The house where Donald Smith lived in Rigolet, Labrador.

During most of these years Simpson presided. He wished Smith well and gave him, in his hard, demanding way, his chance which led to success in Labrador, and then entry into Company circles in London in the next decade. Smith, to some degree, was a product of Simpson's management, as was Robert Campbell. That this was so, suggests that Simpson's character has not yet been wholly given to the world. The man who had to be hard to master the coalition of 1821 could, when master beyond question, take thought for his young men. ◆

The departure from Saskatoon, May 1926. The bride, centre left, wears a long white scarf.

Moonias's Honeymoon

('Moonias' is a Cree word for 'greenhorn')

BY RAY HORSEFIELD

Archdeacon Horsefield served at Grand Rapids, The Pas and Flin Flon. Now semi-retired, he and Mrs Horsefield live in Sidney, B.C. Photographs are from the author's collection, unless credited otherwise.

I WAS BORN in Bristol, England, in the year following the death of Queen Victoria. My father, a clergyman, hoped I would follow in his steps, as had two of my brothers, and sent me to a minor public school, Monkton Combe, that had a name for turning out future bishops. That was not my cup of tea and I got myself transferred to a school in Bristol, Merchant Venturers, that placed more emphasis on modern languages and science than on the classics.

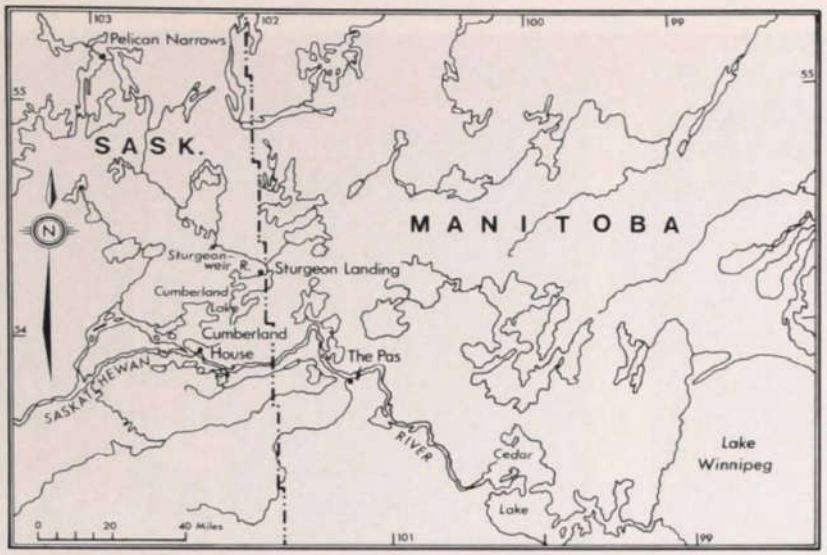
However, a missionary from Aklavik, Edward Hester, came to address a church gathering. I heard him and promptly decided that I was meant to be a missionary to the Eskimos.

I visited the headquarters of the Colonial and Continental Church Society in London, was accepted for training at their college in Saskatoon, Emmanuel College, and arrived there in the fall of 1921. Soon after my arrival the Girls' Auxiliary of the Cathedral sent word to the college that they were staging a play and needed one male performer — it being unthinkable in those days that one of them should take the part — and the lordly seniors volunteered a freshman — me. At rehearsals a Miss Ethel Blackburn insisted that I stared at her. Perhaps I did; if so I was well rewarded.

I never did get to the Arctic. The college authorities, when they turned us out to practise our ministry on unfortunate rural congregations during the summer vacation, sent me instead to Indian reserves: John Smith's near Prince Albert, twice; Cumberland House once, and The Pas once. They pointed out that if I tried to go to Aklavik I should not get there before it was time to start back for the next semester. Aircraft were not available to missionaries in those days. Punch Dickens had made his famous first trip to Baffin Island only three or four years before, and for the general public such flights were as impossible as a flight to the moon would be today.

I was introduced to my first mission by that venerable figure, Archdeacon John A. Mackay of Saskatchewan. By the end of my fourth summer mission I was beginning to be quite at home in the Cree language and with the Crees themselves.

All these elements came together in May 1926 when I reached The Pas with a brand-new clerical collar round my neck, my diplomas from the University of



Baptiste Sahyese, father of 'Big Man'.

Saskatchewan and normal school, and a pretty bride on my arm who had been Ethel Blackburn only a few days before. We were on our way to Pelican Narrows where I was to combine the functions of pastor and school teacher for the summer.

The veteran missionary Canon Albert Fraser and his warm-hearted family took us in and made arrangements for our further travel. We were to go by the *Nipawin* as far as Cumberland House, where a canoe and Indian guides had been alerted to take us the rest of the way. Meanwhile I could pick up my school supplies from the Indian Agent at The Pas, and enough groceries to see us through the summer. It sounded straightforward but it was not.

The *Nipawin* was aground in the Carrot River; the Indian agent lavished upon me exactly 12 five-cent scribblers of cheap newsprint paper, two dozen pencils, six packets of cheap wax crayons, one box of blackboard chalk and a roll of 'slated cloth' — but forbore to mention the small detail that there was no school at Pelican Narrows; not, at least, in the Protestant village. The Catholics in their separate community had a school, but in those days we did not talk to Catholics. And the Western Grocers . . . well, that will appear later.

The Ross Navigation Company, owners of the *Nipawin*, agreed that we might travel on the *Tobin* instead. Now the *Tobin* was strictly a working vessel, much smaller than the *Nipawin*, but with the same flat bottom and stern paddle. It had no accommodation at all for passengers, and especially not for female passengers. If we cared to, we might unroll our bedding on the unprotected upper deck, or we could wait until the *Nipawin* could be set free in about six weeks' time probably, when the river rose. We had two fellow passengers: Father Napoleon Doyon was going part way, and a fellow graduate, the Reverend Harry (later to be Bishop) Hives who was going to Cumberland House. It was to be a well-chaperoned honeymoon.

The sturdy little steamer chugged its way upstream all night, while we tried to get some sleep. But what with the mosquitoes, the excitement of our first charges and the wedding, the frequent stops to take on cordwood (with much banging of sticks thrown from the bank and colourful language from the engineer when the wood did not please him) and what with the sparks that streamed from the funnel all night and threatened to set our bedding afire, I cannot say we slept well. After Father Doyon had left, we borrowed some screen doors from a supply going to the building of the Catholic Indian residential school at Sturgeon Landing, and rigged up a sort of shelter to save us from burning in *this* world at least, and so dozed the night away.

At Cumberland House we were the guests of H. M. S. (Stewart) Cotter and his kindly wife at the Hudson's Bay Company post. Stewart's brother, Sackville, ran the rival Revillon Frères' post there. Mrs Cotter endeavoured to instruct my wife in the mysteries of cooking wild game while I checked the arrangements for transportation. I knew most of the people there, of course, from my summer as a student two years before. 'Big Man' Edward Sahyese and his cousin Angus undertook to be our guides to Pelican Narrows, but the biggest canoe they could muster was a 16-foot freighter, and by the time that I and my bride with all our worldly goods, and the two Sahyeses and their belongings were stowed aboard we had barely three inches of freeboard. It was plain that we would

Bullaty-Lomeo

Children at Pelican Narrows and, above, a view of the settlement.

Bullaty-Lomeo

have to wait for a very calm day before attempting the crossing of Cumberland Lake. Big Man's father, Baptiste, had hinted that he had a wedding present for us and would bring it to the canoe when we embarked.

On the tenth day we embarked in a dead calm. Sure enough, Baptiste showed up at the last moment with his promised gift — a mongrel pup, about a month old, full of fleas and not house-broken: just what we needed in a crowded canoe with all our bedding and food. But he could not be refused, so from then on, until we reached Pelican Narrows, I was to hold the wretched little animal over the side by the scruff of its neck every half hour or so, and hope he did nothing insanitary between whiles.

That evening we came to Sturgeon Landing, at the mouth of the Sturgeon-weir River, and put up at Heyes' stopping place which had been built to meet the needs of 'cat-skinners' bringing ore in winter from Mandy Mine on its way to Edmonton to be smelted. Like the *Tobin,* this place had not been constructed with privacy in mind — the partitions between the rooms were sort of legal fiction, anything but sound- and sight-proof.

Next day we started the long paddle up the Sturgeon-weir. At noon we called a halt to boil the kettle. Up came all our cases of food, so carefully packed by the wholesalers, but not labelled as to content. Everything was there . . . well, almost everything, but no matches! Angus sheepishly produced two slightly damp ones from his vest pocket, and that was all we had. Carefully we laid them to dry on a flat, sun-warmed rock, and carefully got a fire going. But what of the morrow and the morrow's

The first manse: a one-roomed log cabin, open to mosquitoes and protected on the windward side by a tarpaulin.

morrow? It might take us a week to get to Pelican, Big Man thought. Well, we had a stable-lantern for our tent and a can of coal-oil for the lantern. We filled and lit it and carried it tenderly, day and night, from there on, to have fire when we should need it.

The Sturgeon River is full of rapids. It was often necessary for our guides to put us two useless city folk ashore to walk the portages, while they tracked the lightened canoe up the rapids. Of course the miserable pup had to come with us, and so did the lighted lantern for fear of its being upset. The portages were rough, with stretches of rock interspersed with muskeg in which corduroy had been roughly laid to assist the caterpillar tractors. Certainly they were not made for the *moonias* — the greenhorn — and most certainly not for his bride.

At the upper end of one long memorable portage, the guides waited impatiently by the canoe, wondering how I could possibly get lost in broad daylight. I finally came into view, carrying in my right hand the lighted lantern, and under my left arm the protesting pup. My bride was riding pick-a-back with a rapidly swelling ankle.

The canoe was tied up beside a conveniently flat rock for our embarking, but the guides had failed to note that the rock was covered with a wet, green scum. The bride was lowered as gently as possible onto this, and promptly and quietly slipped under the canoe and into the river. We fished her out. The guides built a roaring fire and turned their backs while I searched through unfamiliar female undergarments in the baggage and eventually hit on a combination of items that enabled her to feel clothed again. Once more everything was re-stowed and we embarked.

Five days later we came to Pelican Narrows where that loathesome pup promptly deserted us to go and live amongst its own kind.

Our first manse, fortunately for the summer only, was a one-roomed log house so new that it had not yet been chinked with the usual mixture of clay and grass. This made it delightful for the mosquitoes that passed in and out at will, and for the small fry of the village, whose bright eyes, glued to the chinks, could study the extraordinary antics of the white people — their addiction to soap and water, their hours of rising and retiring, and their curious cookery. It also made it easy for the rain to beat in, so that we had to hang a tarpaulin against the windward wall whenever the rain came. Old Sally, our landlady, for whom the house was being built, was very happy to have had an excuse to move out and live in her tipi near by.

My school would probably have given my teachers at normal school apoplexy. We had no desks, but the children sat on the church floor and used the pews reversed for desks, peering at me very cheerfully through the slatted backs. They had no notion of school routine, having only once before seen a teacher and he a young fellow more interested in teaching them swimming and baseball than reading, writing and arithmetic. But they got a lot of fun out of it, and out of my attempts to explain in Cree what they could not understand in English.

We returned from Pelican Narrows in late September, instructed to go to Grand Rapids, 150 miles from The Pas. We came back to Cumberland in two days by canoe, and thence by the *Nipawin,* now afloat once more. At The Pas, helpful and efficient

The tug 'Sam Brisbin'. Captain Ross stands in the centre.

Canon Fraser had made arrangements for us to go on to Grand Rapids.

We were to travel to the far side of Cedar Lake by his own boat, a slow, heavy, gas-propelled tub, built locally and named for his wife Lily — which was hardly complimentary, though doubtless intended well. At the far side of the lake we were to be met by two canoes of Indians from Grand Rapids, for the *Lily* had not the power to navigate the rushing waterways between Cedar Lake and Lake Winnipeg.

At the last minute something went wrong with the *Lily's* one-lunged engine, so the Canon arranged with the owners of a tug called the *Brisbin* to take us instead. This they did in the first week of October, hurriedly, for it seemed freeze-up was going to be early, and they had no wish to be trapped for the winter on the wrong side of Cedar Lake. They were to put us off, to be met by the Indians, at a place called The Narrows where the lake debouches into a continuation of the river on its way to Grand Rapids. But when we reached The Narrows there was no Indian in sight, or any other human being.

This posed a dilemma for the captain of the *Brisbin*. He dared not stay around, because of the danger of freezing in, and he did not like to leave a couple of greenhorns — newly-weds at that — stranded to starve. There was no telephone or radio with which to communicate with either The Pas or Grand Rapids, to learn what had gone wrong. We had indeed a goodly supply of groceries, including matches this time, to last us for the winter, but it was typical of our greenness that we had no axe. The captain compromised; he had his crew help us set up our tent and chop a supply of willow firewood, and then he tied up for the night and waited to see what would happen.

When morning came and our Indians did not, he asked us what we wanted to do, for he could delay no longer. Did we want to stay here, or return with him? It was tempting to say 'We will return with you', but our orders were clear; we were to wait at The Narrows to be picked up by Grand Rapids men who would be coming for us with canoes. We made up our camp fire, for it was beginning to snow, and crept into our tent so we would not see the *Brisbin* leave. Very forlorn we felt indeed. We spent the day going outside occasionally to shout in case somebody — *anybody* — should be within earshot, but there was no response, only the hiss of the falling snow, the smooth gurgle of the river, and the cry of migrating wildfowl.

Late in the evening, however, we heard a shot. We put our voices together and raised a hearty shout. It was answered with another shot and soon a strange voice, and a canoe came round the point on which we were camped. It was one of the two sent to meet us. The outlet of the lake was by several channels, any one of which might with reason have been called The Narrows, and our new friends had been waiting a day and half by one of the other channels. They had heard and seen the *Brisbin*, but had thought nothing of it, since they were looking for the *Lily*. You may guess we were glad enough to see them.

It was too late in the day to proceed then, so we camped that night, shivering in our tent while the snow fell steadily outside. Early in the morning our new parishioners came crowding in for morning prayers, and then we packed up and were on our way.

At the head of the Grand Rapids we disembarked and one of the men walked the portage and returned with the rolling stock of what may be the oldest railway in the West — a portage tramway of about

St James's Church at Grand Rapids; as it was in 1927 during Reverend Horsefield's five years at the settlement.

The author broadcasting in Cree from Flin Flon to the northern reserves.

three miles laid down by the Hudson's Bay Company when freight for the West used to come in by York Factory and across Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids by York boat.

Grand Rapids is changed now, I hear. There is a hydro dam that blocks the river, and a highway out to Winnipeg, and electric light and telephones, and all sorts of things. Fifty years ago there was none of this. Mail came down the river from The Pas 'once per month perhaps' — the 'perhaps' referring to the freeze-up and break-up of the river ice, and sometimes to the whim of the mailman. The doctor came once a year, whether we needed him or not, travelling from Selkirk with the treaty party in the summer (when the fishing was good); the Mountie came perhaps twice in the year.

Our home lacked a roof, and the expected lumber for it had failed to come on the freight boat from Winnipeg, so we made do with a pole roof heavily loaded with peat from the muskeg in which were innumerable crawling bugs and in which the bats were not slow to take up residence, enjoying the central heating from below and the plenteous banquet of insect life. It was disconcerting, every time we lit the Aladdin lamp in the evening, to have a bat or two descend from overhead to swoop excitedly about the room; but we soon learned to carry the lamp outside and run back in fast when the bat had followed us out, shutting an inhospitable door in its face.

We spent five happy years at Grand Rapids. Again I had to combine the offices of school teacher and priest, with the additional responsibility of being dispenser of the Indian Department's stock of medicines (about which I knew only what was printed on the labels), registrar of vital statistics, and general panjandrum. Then we were moved to The Pas, where we spent ten years on the reserve, with oversight of a large territory up the Hudson Bay Railway and down the Saskatchewan, where the missions were staffed by lay people. Then in 1941 I was transferred to Flin Flon, where most of my work was naturally among white people, though I kept up my Cree in visiting the hospital there, and with a radio program in that language. ◆

Lord Selkirk's Highland Regiment and the Kildonan Settlers

By J. M. Bumsted

The author, a professor of history at Simon Fraser University, is working on a proposed three-volume biography of the Fifth Earl of Selkirk.

THOMAS DOUGLAS, the Fifth Earl of Selkirk, was an incorrigible optimist, maintaining serene confidence in the eventual acceptance and implementation of his projects. Constantly depending on the ability of others to appreciate and support his schemes — and seldom allowing for misadventure — he often constructed complex and interconnected operations which could collapse like a house of cards when one of the supporting elements was taken from its place. To make matters worse, Selkirk was given to taking advantage of unexpected events which could be linked into his plans, even if such opportunism involved making promises based on other commitments not yet completely secured.

In short, Selkirk was inclined to allow his enthusiasm to outrun his backing, and he was often forced to last-minute improvisations. His Red River ventures offer many illustrations of these tendencies, but one of the most fragile and disastrous projects connected with Red River was that which began with Selkirk's proposal to the British government early in 1813 for the raising of a Highland regiment to defend Canada. It ended a few months later with the arrival at Fort Churchill of a shipload of disease-racked Highlanders from Kildonan. The story, which can be pieced together from Selkirk's own papers and from Scottish records only recently made available, is a fascinating and revealing one.

From his first interest in the country around Lake Winnipeg, the notion of peopling it with Highlander soldier-settlers was one which appealed to Selkirk. Indeed, he had made such a proposal to the British government as early as February 1803. A Highland regiment, of course, would not only provide protection for British interests in North America, but equally significantly, would provide settlers financed at government expense. Selkirk was not alone in finding the idea attractive. A number of similar proposals were made during the Napoleonic Wars, and two had actually been implemented: the Glengarry Fencibles recruited for North American service in the 1790s, and the Canadian Fencible Regiment of 1803-04, which had mutinied in Glasgow and been disbanded without ever reaching Canada.

Selkirk had sent his own privately recruited and financed settlers to Red River in 1811 and 1812. He was fully aware of the constantly deteriorating relations between Britain and the United States. Several North American correspondents (including Miles Macdonell) wrote of the advantages which war might bring from the standpoint of leading government to accept responsibility for potential Red River settlers. Having for years impressed ministries with the strategic importance of the western country, Selkirk only needed the arrival of open conflict in North America to resurrect his military schemes.

Although the United States declared war on Britain in June 1812, Selkirk did not get around to thinking seriously about soldiers for America until mid-January of 1813. Through the latter half of 1812 he had been involved in various political matters, including his own re-election to the House of Lords as a representative peer for Scotland, and in his duties as Lord Lieutenant of Kirkcudbright commanding home defence for the county. But worsening reports of the progress of the 1812 party he had sent to Hudson Bay, news of American raids on his Baldoon property in Upper Canada, and an erosion of support for his settlement plans within the Hudson's Bay Company together led him to recognize the obvious advantages of defending Canada with Highlanders who could ultimately be settled at Red River.

On 23 January 1813 Selkirk wrote to his Highland friend Alexander MacDonald of Dalilia that all

previous plans for Red River were in abeyance, as the Earl was intending to propose to government that he raise and lead a corps modelled on the Canadian Fencible Regiment for 'service in America, during the present hostilities there'. A stipulation would be added that the men should settle in Red River at the close of service and their families should be transported at government expense. Only married men were to be recruited, and allowances would be paid to maintain families left at home. Selkirk hoped government would pay the allowances, as well as outfit and provision the troops. Apparently he was initially unfamiliar with the details of the Canadian Regiment debâcle, and did not recognize that its complex history had made government, and especially the British Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York, highly suspicious of Highland recruiting for North American service. A week later, he reported to MacDonald that the Secretary of War, Lord Bathurst, had approved his plan in general principle, and quick action was essential to collect a respectable list of Highland-connected officers.

By 13 February 1813, Selkirk, in a whirlwind of activity, had assembled an impressive list of prospective officers, nearly all with Highland credentials and family connections. These, it was hoped, would aid local recruiting. Four days later he forwarded the outlines of a proposal to Lord Bathurst. What the Earl offered was to raise, inside of six months, a Highland regiment of 1,000 men for North American service 'on the principle that none but married men shall be admitted as recruits, & that upon the reduction of the regiment, the men shall be conveyed to the place of settlement (i.e., Red River) at the Expence of Government.' Selkirk was to be a colonel with temporary rank, thus fulfilling a long-standing military ambition never fully satisfied by his duties as Lord Lieutenant. Moreover, military service was one of the few approved ways an important figure like Selkirk could use to justify leaving Britain and his public offices during a severe wartime crisis. The Earl had many reasons for desiring to be on the scene in North America.

Officers were to be recommended by Selkirk, and those from the regular army with the rank of captain and below would get a permanent step in rank (the big selling point in collecting officers), while those with local influence appointed temporarily would receive an ensign's half pay after reduction. A bounty of £5 per recruit was to be paid, and each soldier's family would get a £10 per annum allowance (partly based on pay deductions) until the family could be settled in America. In case of a protracted war, the colonel could discharge to the settlement one-tenth of any men who had served two years, providing they were replaced. The men were bound to full service until eighteen months after the peace, and would be discharged at

McCord Museum, Montreal

Lord Selkirk, from a portrait believed to have been done in Canada, 1815-1818. The artist is unknown.

The property of the Countess of Sutherland

Elizabeth Gordon, Countess of Sutherland; also the Marchioness of Stafford between 1803 and 1833.

Red River, thus assuring they would not disperse and find their own lands. Government would provide conveyance to Red River for soldiers and their families, as well as a year's provisions. In return the men would serve as a local militia, training for three weeks per year at their own expense as a condition of their tenures. The scheme was a mixture of precedents established by previous North American regiments modified by Selkirk's own notions of how to defend and settle North America. Lord Bathurst immediately turned the proposal over to the Commander-in-Chief for final approval.

Any hope which Selkirk and his officers entertained of the ready acceptance of the regiment was quickly dashed by the Duke of York, whose observations on the plan were returned to the Earl at the beginning of March. The Duke's criticisms were directed to specific parts of the proposal rather than to the principle of it. He began by pointing out that both the promotion of regular officers, a permanent step, and the retirement of temporary ones at ensign's half pay were 'innovations' never previously included in the arrangements for any fencible corps recruited in Britain. Moreover, the payment of an allowance to the family, even after deducting the 3d per day from the soldier's wages which Selkirk's research indicated was the maximum the man could spare, would cost £5.8.9 per man per year, and this figure was exactly £5.8.9 more than any British regular infantry soldier received. Discharging men after only two years' service while the war continued was objectionable, as was the provisioning of men for a year after discharge, 'an Indulgence which no old Soldier ever enjoys'. The Commander-in-Chief had been burnt by North American Fencible regiments recruited in the Highlands before, because of the special inducements required to raise them, and he had no intention of becoming involved again. While his comments are from today's perspective perhaps most striking for what they reveal of the appalling conditions of military service for common soldiers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, from the standpoint of the time they were eminently reasonable.

Characteristically, Selkirk took these criticisms not as the complete rejection of his plan which the Duke undoubtedly intended, but as objections which could be met with counter-argument, revision, and further negotiation. The Earl thus responded with a lengthy memorandum to Bathurst which vigorously defended his proposals as essential, given the unique situation in both the Highlands and in North America, and particularly given the recruitment of only married men. The concentration on married men was a particularly attractive part of Selkirk's scheme, for it would provide North American reinforcements without affecting ordinary recruitment; married men with families were not part of the militia conscription pool and seldom volunteered for overseas service. What Selkirk did not emphasize, of course, was that families were also essential to his settlement at Red River. The Earl liked to develop ingenious schemes which appealed to everyone's best interests. In conclusion, Selkirk insisted that the money was being invested in a permanent military force for the colonies, and 'ought perhaps to be considered as an experiment'. He was far fonder of experimentation than was the government, however.

At this point, with the Duke of York rejecting Selkirk's scheme and the Earl convinced he would ultimately win approval of at least a modified plan (for he seemed to have the support of the Secretary of War) Selkirk was presented with what he chose to view as a marvellous windfall. The opportunity arose out of the profound changes which were occurring in Sutherlandshire in the northern Highlands. William Young, the chief factor of the Marquis and the Marchioness of Stafford (later the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland), was reorganizing their Highland estates, converting the vast infertile mountain lands of Sutherlandshire to sheep farming, and removing the existing tenantry from the barren glens to the sea-coast, where they would receive small plots of land and become crofters.

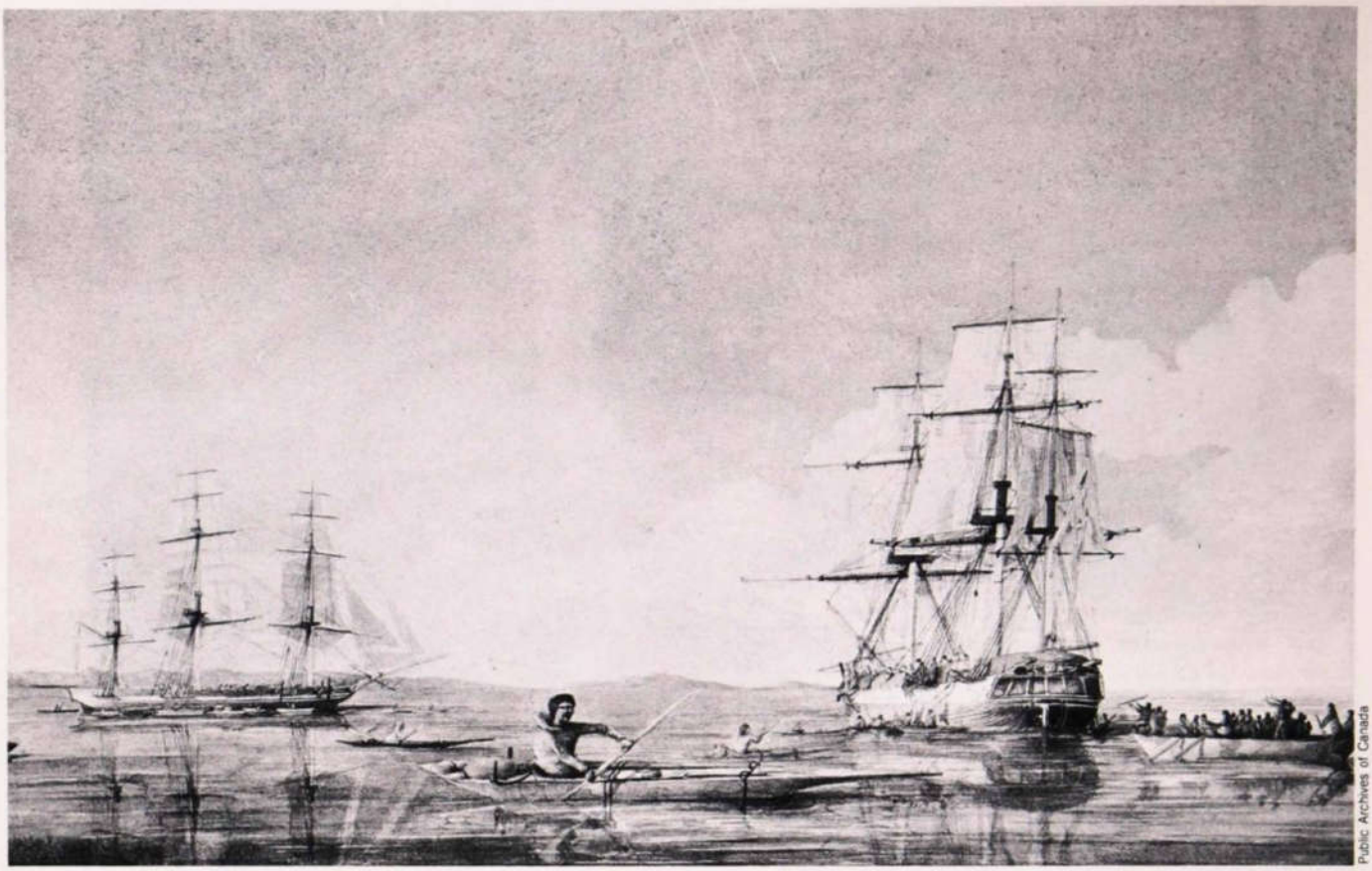
Most of the populace of the region accepted the changes, however sullenly, but the two thousand residents of Kildonan parish were less tractable. They gathered to protest the moves in several large

A crofter's cottage in early nineteenth-century Skye.

assemblages (which Stafford agents viewed as 'riots') and appointed one of their number, a retired recruiting sergeant of the 93rd Regiment, to take their case to London. Kildonan was not abjectly pleading for mercy, but prepared to bid high for the land. Sergeant William Macdonald was authorized by the tenants of Kildonan to offer the Stafford family more rent for their lands than the sheep farmer had agreed to pay. He was also to offer to the Duke of York leave to raise seven hundred effective men in the region — nearly a regiment — to be 'at the Comander in Cheif's Disposel in aney part of his Majestys Dominions at Home or North America, provided their aged Fathers and Mothers and Wives and Children cane with propriety keep their Native home.' Neither the Marquis of Stafford nor the Duke of York would grant Macdonald an audience. Only the Earl of Selkirk was willing to listen to the sergeant's proposals. With mounting excitement his lordship recognized that here was his regiment.

Soon after his meeting with Macdonald, Selkirk visited the Marchioness of Stafford (the Kildonan lands were part of her inheritance and she supervised their management) to explain his project of a North American regiment. If he enlisted Kildonan men, could the Staffords accommodate their families until the war was over? The Marchioness found the thought 'impracticable', for 'leaving the Families without the men to assist in settling them would only increase the difficulty'. A later meeting with her ladyship and other efforts failed to turn up a satisfactory place for relocation of the families of the prospective soldiers. Despite these difficulties, Selkirk continued to negotiate with Sergeant Macdonald, going so far as to prepare a jointly initialled series of queries and answers which Macdonald took back to Kildonan. The Earl's responses were based on official approval of his plan for a Highland Regiment, and he was now prepared to send the families of the soldiers on ahead to Red River, provided they could obtain government allowances.

While Macdonald returned to Kildonan under the distinct impression that he was to recruit men for Selkirk's regiment, the Earl had only authorized him to collect a list from which recruits could later be taken. In the meantime, Selkirk submitted to the government a modified version of his earlier proposal, based both on the objections of the Duke of York and the Kildonan windfall. Dropping his insistance on married men, he reduced the family allowance to the amount deducted from the soldier's pay. By proposing to transport (at government expense) any families to Red River at the outset, he virtually eliminated the discharge and provisioning objections while finding a home for Kildonan wives and children. With alterations to the proposed rank structure and retirement arrangements of the officers, Selkirk had thus met all of the Duke of York's initial criticisms. Kildonan fitted perfectly into his revisions, and indeed, helped make them possible.



Public Archives of Canada

Hudson's Bay Company ships 'Prince of Wales' and 'Eddystone', from a water-colour by Robert Hood. The Selkirk settlers of 1813 sailed aboard the 'Prince of Wales'.

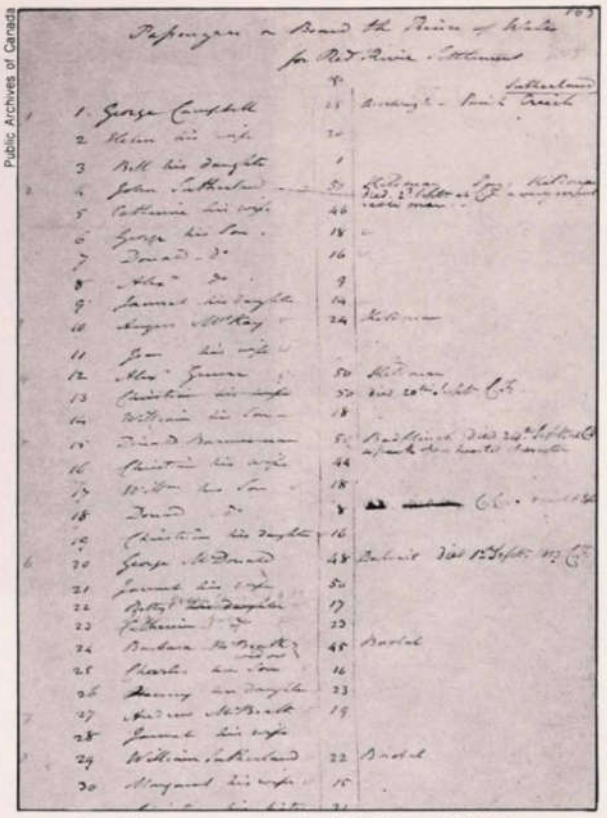
To Selkirk's chagrin, the Commander-in-Chief again rejected the scheme on 14 April 1813, this time categorically and unconditionally. Not quite beaten, Selkirk immediately wrote to Bathurst offering to create a corps for Northwest frontier service composed of resident fur traders supplemented by a few disciplined soldiers. The soldiers would be conveyed to North America at government expense and would be settled in Hudson's Bay Company territories after the war. The Earl offered his own services to lead this corps and to govern 'those parts of North America which lie beyond the limits of Canada a Territory not now included in any regular Government'. Still attempting to get to North America and still hoping for some government association with Red River, Selkirk was also clearly trying to fit in the Kildonan people. This final proposal was not taken very seriously by anyone, and is interesting mostly for its indications of the points Selkirk most wanted to salvage from the situation.

In the end, the only outcome of Selkirk's concerted efforts to combine the war in North America with Red River settlement was a commitment of sorts to Sergeant William Macdonald and his Kildonan people based upon an assumption of government sponsorship which was not to be forthcoming. Macdonald for his part had returned to Kildonan in high spirits and had quickly acquired a large list of over thirteen hundred recruits and families based upon his discussions with and memorandum from the Earl. While Selkirk had emphasized the provisional nature of his plans for the regiment, Macdonald operated as if they were definitive. To make the situation worse, many Kildonan tenants refused relocation within the Stafford lands, selling their stock and effects in anticipation of their imminent departure for North America 'with Lord Selkirk'. Informed by the Staffords of this development, Selkirk was forced to a desperate series of last-minute improvisations to recover something from the shambles, and it would be at least partly his honour and credibility in the Highlands which were at stake. To do something for the Kildonan people, he would have to return to his previous pre-regiment plans for Red River settlement and combine them with the Hudson's Bay Company requirements for young clerks and traders. And he would have to act quickly. He did not hesitate a moment.

Late in April, Selkirk wrote to the Marquis of Stafford justifying and explaining his new plan. The people of Kildonan were the unfortunate victims of a great change for the general good, but would never be happy set upon small crofts. How much better such a 'bold and hearty peasantry' would people British colonies! The scheme Selkirk intended to propose to them involved sending able-bodied working men the first season to prepare the way, followed by the remainder of the families over the next few years. Still looking for temporary accommodation for those not immediately transported, Selkirk hoped the prospective emigrant families could be left temporarily on their own lands, or alternatively, relocated for the moment on lands which the Earl was prepared to lease from the Staffords for the purpose. The Staffords were prepared to countenance the latter option (although nothing ever came of it), for as it became clear that Selkirk had not got his regiment and was planning settlement at Red River on his own account, factor William Young wrote that the Earl 'has brought himself in to an awfull scrape, and us to a world of trouble, for what can the people now do for themselves, without proper aid from Government and certain pay to the people?' A few days later Selkirk sent his own agent to Kildonan to inform the people of the altered arrangements and to select first recruits.

The Kildonan tenants were informed there would be no regiment; although Selkirk was prepared to take to Red River sixty to eighty young men who 'would proceed without their familys on the usual terms of paying their passage, who would on their Arrival either get a *Few* [acres] on easy terms, or a certain number of Acres to purchase from his Lordship'. In addition, the Hudson's Bay Company wished another sixty young men. Such a proposal was a far cry from the arrangements discussed with Sergeant Macdonald. It was little more than an ordinary emigration venture restricted largely to the young and able. As William Young queried, 'how the others are in consequence of what Macdonald has held out to replace their Corn and Cattle which they have sold off . . . is more than I can divine.' Selkirk himself headed north at the end of May, personally concluding agreements with the prospective emigrants and giving many receipts for their passage money in his own hand. Many of those signed up were to be sent out in 1814. But the disparity between the final terms and Macdonald's earlier reports undoubtedly explains much of the subsequent Kildonan hostility to Selkirk, including the angry tone of Donald Gunn's account (in Tuttle's *History of Manitoba)* of the recruiting conducted in Kildonan by the Earl.

In the end, Selkirk was forced to take thirteen of the most importunate families in 1813. They sailed with thirty-seven single emigrants (mainly young males) aboard the *Prince of Wales* from Stromness on 29 June. As might have been expected from a venture


Public Archives of Canada

A section of the passenger list for the 'Prince of Wales', 1813; probably in Selkirk's hand. Deaths resulting from the typhus outbreak are recorded in the right-hand column.

conceived amidst such confusion, the Kildonan emigration of 1813 did not prosper. Typhus was brought aboard the *Prince of Wales,* and five emigrants as well as the young surgeon hired by Selkirk to lead the expedition died on shipboard. Another thirty were weakened by the disease, some to die later. To make matters worse, the captain of the vessel refused to land the settlers at York Factory, where they were expected, depositing them instead at Fort Churchill without proper provisions for a winter on the Bay they could not avoid.

As the disappointments piled up and even led to tragedy, it was a small wonder that many of this earliest contingent of Kildonan settlers were not among Selkirk's most loyal supporters in the troubles with the North West Company. Ironically enough, the news of their arrival at Fort Churchill — and Selkirk's promise of more settlers in 1814 — helped push Miles Macdonell into his ill-fated Pemmican Proclamation. Selkirk's miscalculations, like his promotions, had a wide-reaching effect. All of his undoubted assets of character — his enthusiasm, energy, stubbornness, and ingenuity — could become liabilities when they led him to overreach himself. ◆

Lord Selkirk's grave, May 1976.

The Restoration of

Photographs and Text by Hubert G. Mayes

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON of 24 May 1978, a ceremony marking the restoration of Lord Selkirk's grave took place in Orthez, France.

Several biographies of Lord Selkirk explain how it happened that his death and burial occurred in southern France. After his return to England in 1818 his health, which had been seriously affected by his conflicts with the North West Company, continued to decline. In the autumn of 1819 he and Lady Selkirk and their two young daughters were making their way south to the salubrious climate of Spain when they arrived at Pau in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Delighted with the beauty of the countryside they decided to spend the winter there. The tuberculosis from which the Earl was suffering was unfortunately far advanced and on 8 April 1820, he died, not quite 49 years of age. As there was no Protestant cemetery in Pau, his body was interred in Orthez, a small city about 25 miles to the west.

On a trip to France in May 1976, I located Selkirk's grave and found that the tombstone and plot were in a state of neglect. The two large oak trees standing in opposite corners of the small enclosure were dying and falling branches were causing damage to other graves. After recording the inscriptions (a difficult task because of weathering), I left Orthez, resolved to stimulate interest in restoring the grave. The account of my visit to the cemetery appeared in the Spring 1977 issue of *The Beaver* and shortly after its publication I received a telephone call from Dr N. J. McMillan, a senior geologist with Aquitaine Company of Canada Ltd., a subsidiary, based in Calgary, of a French-owned oil company. Dr McMillan informed me that after visiting the grave several years earlier, he had persuaded his company to restore it.

It was appropriate that Aquitaine should take the initiative in this matter, since the head office of the parent company, Société Nationale Elf Aquitaine, is located in Pau. Dr McMillan invited the Manitoba Historical Society to be associated with Aquitaine and the municipality of Orthez in the restoration project. When the work was completed and the date for the ceremony set, I was asked by the Manitoba Historical Society to be its representative at the event. As the date coincided with a visit to France which I had already planned, I was happy to accept. In the meantime the Historic Sites Advisory Board of the Province of Manitoba had become interested in the future of the grave and had written to the mayor of Orthez, offering to maintain the plot in perpetuity. In his reply the

The restored grave: two young American oaks replace the dying trees.

Lord Selkirk's Grave

Dr Mayes is associate professor of French, University of Winnipeg

mayor thanked the Board, but stated that it was the wish of the municipality of Orthez to assume this responsibility itself.

I arrived in Orthez several days before the ceremony and was soon on my way to the cemetery. At the gate I was greeted by the caretaker, M. Douchine, who had been so helpful to me on my previous visit. The transformation of the grave was startling. The trees were gone, the iron fence had been repaired, painted and mounted on a new concrete base. The plot was neatly covered with gravel and the lettering on the tombstones re-engraved and painted. All the work had been done with care, and only someone who had seen the grave as it was, could view it with feelings of nostalgia. I noted with some consternation that the inscriptions differed in several places from the wording I had recorded. More sophisticated methods of bringing out the original engraving had produced the authentic version, which reads as follows:

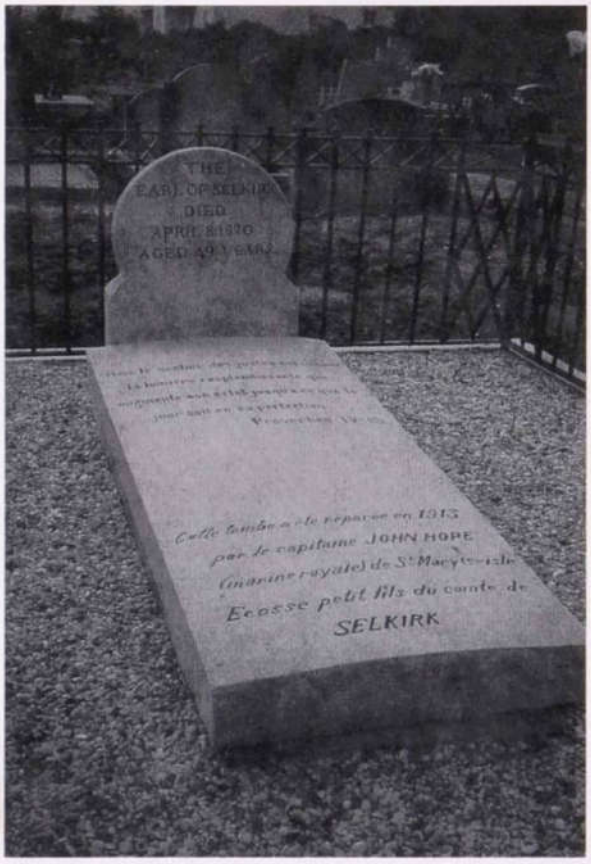
> Mais le sentier des justes est comme
> la lumière resplendissante qui
> augmente son éclat jusqu'à ce que le
> jour soit en sa perfection.
>
> Proverbes IV 18

> Cette tombe a été reparée en 1913
> par le capitaine JOHN HOPE
> (marine royale) de St Mary's-isle
> Ecosse petit fils du comte de
> SELKIRK

On the afternoon of the ceremony, the guests and members of the municipal council of Orthez assembled in the main floor vestibule of the city hall. A display of Canadian maps and pictures from the Canadian consulate at Bordeaux had been set up by the municipal authorities and was attracting considerable attention. At five o'clock two buses transported the dignitaries and observers to the cemetery. As the group approached the grave under an overcast sky, the strains of a solemn march played by the Harmonie Muncipale d'Orthez set an appropriate mood for the occasion. From left to right, the flags of Manitoba, Canada and France were flying over the plot. The Union Jack which had been provided by British authorities had proven too large for any of the standards available, so the Manitoba flag, with its Union Jack in the corner, had to serve a double function. Fortunately, Mr Mason, Vice Council of Great Britain from Bayonne, understood the problem

and had good naturedly accepted some jocular comments about the size of the flag.

After everyone was assembled, Mayor Jacques Destandau announced a one-minute silence in memory of Lord Selkirk. This was followed by the playing of three national anthems: 'God Save the Queen', 'O Canada' and 'La Marseillaise'. The band leader had had considerable difficulty in obtaining the music for 'O Canada' and, since neither he nor any members of the band were familiar with the anthem, had some misgivings about playing it. However, the performance was splendid, and if my emotions were typical, all the Canadians present were deeply moved. The mayor then introduced Professor Pierre Tucoo-Chala, a professor of history at the University of Pau and President of the Académie de Béarn. Speaking entirely from memory, except when reading an account of Selkirk's last moments, Professor Tucoo-Chala gave a masterly presentation of the Earl's life and philanthropic achievements. In conclusion, he referred to Lord Selkirk's love of trees and invited those who had been designated to plant two American oaks in an open space behind the plot to proceed with this part of the ceremony. The four persons who shared this honour were Mayor Jacques Destandau, M. Ménard, Canadian Consul-General at Bordeaux, M. Louis P. Pradal Morel, former president of Aquitaine Company of Canada, and myself. We held the two small trees steady as M. Douchine shovelled earth in around the roots. The mayor then brought the ceremony to a close by inviting his guests to return to the city hall for a reception. There, a brief speech by M. Destandau was followed by greetings from M. Pradal Morel and M. Ménard. Certificates of attendance were presented to the participants and to others who had undertaken various responsibilities in connection with the restoration. Tribute was also paid to Dr N. J. McMillan, whose enthusiasm for the project had provided the initial impetus but who, unfortunately, was unable to be present.



The lettering on the headstone and flat stone is now clearly legible. The grave is to be maintained by the municipality of Orthez, France.

It should be recorded that it was not possible for any descendant of Lord Selkirk or the present Earl of Selkirk to be in attendance, a matter of regret for the organizers of the ceremony. The reception came to a pleasant close with the serving of wine and other refreshments.

The next morning I walked to the cemetery to spend a quiet moment beside the grave. It was M. Douchine's suggestion that, as a Manitoban who had taken a special interest in the restoration, I should have my own ceremony. When I arrived, I found that M. Douchine had cut a bouquet of roses from his garden and had laid it for me at the foot of the grave. The few minutes I spent there will no doubt be a prelude to many visits in the future by Canadians who wish to honour the memory of Lord Selkirk. ◆

The ceremony at the graveside. The flags of Manitoba, Canada and France fly over the plot.

M. Douchine, caretaker of the cemetery at Orthez, chops pieces from the dead oaks into firewood.

The Tree-line

Photographs and Story
by Fred Bruemmer

Spruces at sunset; near the tree-line in northern Manitoba.

THE TREE-LINE IN CANADA slopes from the north-west corner of the Yukon Territory south-eastward, dips down into northern Manitoba, reaches Hudson Bay near Churchill and plunges in a narrow coastal strip south and east as far as the James Bay coast of northern Ontario. It cuts across northernmost Quebec and Labrador and then curves down along the Atlantic coast nearly to Nain, in Newfoundland.

Nowhere along its great extent is it really a clearly defined line. Temperature determines the tree-line's position. It coincides, in a general way, with the course of the 50° F. isotherm for the warmest month of the year. But taiga and tundra meld and merge into one another in erratic interlinking fashion, as local conditions of soil, moisture, humidity, elevation, precipitation and permafrost favour or foil the growth of trees.

Islands of tundra occur deep within the boreal forest and oases of trees cluster in valleys amidst the tundra far to the north of the tree-line. Long ago, Eskimos from the treeless north travelled to these isolated copses to get much-needed wood for kayaks and sleds.

They knew the 'clump of large spruce trees on the southeast branch of Dease River' mentioned by Stefansson, and the famous, nearly 40-mile long stretch of forest along the Thelon River, regularly visited by people from as far away as central Victoria Island, a round trip of well over a 1,000 miles.

Life hangs in balance between growth and destruction for the trees at the tree-line. Most are hardy spruces, but here they have reached their limit of possible existence and are marked by the never-ending struggle to survive. As nascent trees, the snow protected them in winter. But as they grow and poke above the snow, they are exposed to the full fury of winter winds, carrying with it needle-sharp spicules of snow and ice that blast the buds and shear the delicate sprouts that grew in summer. Only on the leeward side can branches survive on the upper part of the trunk receiving meagre but vital protection from the trunk itself, so that from afar the spruces look like ragged, wind-torn weathervanes. 'Flagged trees', botanists call them. Only near the ground are these trees surrounded by long, sprawling branches. The upper limit of this dense branch skirt indicates the normal level of protective winter snow.

Propagation, too, is a problem. These flagged, mop-headed trees bear relatively few cones. Squirrels clip cones and birds eat the seeds. Wind carries many seeds far out onto the hostile tundra. Others fall onto the thick carpet of lichens and mosses. Held above the life-giving soil, they do not germinate and take root. Only in the shelter of trees do some seedlings survive.

Foiled in nearly all their efforts to multiply sexually through seeds, the tree-line spruces would be in bad shape if they did not have a second method at their disposal. They multiply vegetatively, through 'layering'. As their lowest branches, creeping across the ground, become covered by lichens and mosses and duff, they begin to sprout roots and from these rooted branches new trees arise.

It is in this vegetative manner that the trees of the remote tree oases within the tundra continue to multiply, or at least to replace themselves. These copses, scientists think, may be relicts of forests that flourished several thousand years ago during a more clement climatic period, when the tree-line was about 150 miles further north than it is now.

The tree-line is the end of one life zone and the beginning of another. Just south of the tree-line, for instance, 10,000 species of insects exist; just north of it, on the tundra, only 500. Canada jays or spruce grouse venture to the forest edge but not beyond, and neither do martens or their principal prey, the red squirrels. To other species, arctic owls or arctic foxes, the tundra is home. And a few, like the caribou, commute, spending summer on the tundra and winter within the forest belt. In former times, the tree-line was also the border between two human communities. The Indians, essentially, were a people of the forest, while the tundra and the northern coasts were home to the Eskimos.

Not only is there a considerable difference between the plants and animals on either side of the tree-line, but the smell, the sound, the feel of either realm is totally different. The forest gives shelter; it encloses and protects. The wind sings and soughs in the frayed tree-tops. It is dark and moist. On calm, warm days, the forest air is fragrant with resin and the earthy smell of mosses and muskeg. The tundra is open, wide and limitless, an infinity of land and lakes, stretching from horizon to horizon.

The Chipewyan settlement at Little Duck Lake in northernmost Manitoba, enjoys the best of both these worlds. The eastern Chipewyan Indians lived here once, from 1934 when the Hudson's Bay Company built its Caribou Post at the lake, until 1956 when they were moved to Churchill. They spent 20 unhappy years in Churchill, unable to adjust, and then returned to the forest, to Tadoule Lake, where they built a new community. I lived with them there for some weeks and, when the opportunity presented itself, Allan Code (a young man from Toronto married to a Chipewyan and now a resident of Tadoule) and I flew the 80 miles north to Little Duck Lake, to see the tree-line region about which the older Indians had told us so much.

Our home for those weeks was the old Hudson's Bay Company store and manager's house, now owned by the Manitoba government. It is a credit to its builders (helped by the slowness of decay in this region) since after more than 40 years it is still in excellent condition. Manitoba scientists studying caribou inhabit it occasionally in summer. In winter, it is home

Caribou Post on Little Duck Lake, closed by the Company in 1956. In winter a bear hibernates in the basement of the store and manager's house.

Black spruce near Tadoule Lake.

Abandoned long ago by its Chipewyan owners, a log cabin slowly deteriorates at Little Duck Lake.

to a bear, who has broken a window and hibernates cozily in the basement.

A major caribou migration route crosses the area. Chipewyans hunted them here for about 1,500 years and, recent archaeological work has shown, Paleo-Indians before them for several millennia. Wherever we went, we found caribou bones and antlers — the older nearly buried by mosses or encrusted with multi-coloured lichens; the more recent, bleached to a chalky white, the tips of the antler tines nibbled by rodents in need of calcium.

We walked south in search of the Indians' log cabins, keeping to the rounded bare hills above the tree-flanked, fast-flowing Wolverine River. The ground was covered by large patches of bearberries, their waxy-glossy leaves varying from vivid brilliant crimson to a rich sombre wine-red. The Indians and English, Samuel Hearne reported in the 1770s 'mix (bearberry leaves) with tobacco, which makes it smoke mild and pleasant; and would, I am persuaded, be very acceptable to many smokers in England.'

Dwarf birches and dwarf willow skirted the copses of spruce, yellow and brick-red against the sombre blue-green of the conifers. On moist ground near the very edge of the tree-line grew larches (tamarack), the dainty green of their soft needles just turning to fawn-brown, and to honey-yellow where frost had touched them.

We had lunch at the river rapids. I made a fire of driftwood, tangled masses of alder and spruce pushed high up the bank by spring ice. Allan caught grayling in the rushing, clear water. In quick succession he pulled half a dozen ashore. They flapped on the rocks, their scales iridescent, the large dorsal fins fanning out, covered with bright blue spots that faded swiftly in death.

We found some cabins in a clearing among a large stand of scratchy spruces. Fireweed covered the area, its stems purple-red, tufted with white. On the once-bare ground near the cabins, spruces had sprouted. They had done well on this sheltered, man- and dog-fertilized spot. A few had grown to a height of nearly six feet in 20 years. Some of the gnarled spruces that Ernest Thompson Seton examined in 1907 near the tree-line north of Great Slave Lake were 300 and more years old, yet barely eight feet tall.

At night the northern lights were spectacular. Constantly changing streamers, and whorls and curtains of greenish-white danced silent and eerie across the sky, changing to deep violet and again to pale green, and the stars glittered brilliantly in a velvet-black sky. We sat on the steps of the old building and watched in awed wonder. Two short-eared owls flew erratically about, spotted us, banked close on broad, silent wings for a better look and then, appalled, vanished into the night.

Another day, we paddled our canoe across the lake and walked north to the narrows that connect Little Duck Lake with the large Nejanilini Lake. We left the forest behind and walked over long, rolling dun and sere hills, spattered with the crimson of bearberry leaves. In a few gullies, little clusters of stunted, twisted spruces clung obstinately to the meagre soil.

As we reached the crest of the highest hill, the tundra spread out in front of us, a vast sweep of land and water, awesome in its lonely immensity. Snow buntings in nervous, twittering flocks hurried across the land and high in the sky, skeins of geese winged purposefully towards the south.

A few days after we returned to Tadoule, two young Chipewyans, Jimmie Clipping and Moses Thorassie, took Allan and me along on a hunting trip. We crossed the lake and camped near its south end among widely-spaced birches, pines and spruces at the edge of an

The narrows between Little Duck and Nejanilini Lakes. A patch of bearberries shows red in the foreground.

A birch near Tadoule Lake. The eastern Chipewyan Indians returned to this area in 1976, after twenty unhappy years in Churchill, Manitoba. Their original settlement at Little Duck Lake is 80 miles to the north.

esker, the accumulated sandy sediment of a long-ago sub-glacial stream.

Birches bordered the lake and the shores of the South Seal River, flamboyant against the backdrop of dark spruces. In a quiet bend of the river, beavers had their home. They had cut birches and aspen. Near their lodge a thick mat of branches lay under water, their food supply for the winter.

It was cold at night. Two saw-whet owls talked near our tent, monotonously and persistently. At dawn, sandhill cranes flew over, their gurgling, throaty calls wild and loud in the quiet of the morning. The ground was coated with frost, each violet bilberry leaf rimed with a filigree of delicate crystals.

Canada jays, ash-grey, black-masked, cheeky, little pilferers, came to share our breakfast. Even in this remote region they knew about plastic bags. They pecked and tore them, hoping to find something edible inside. One used the same exposed branch as a favourite perch. Suddenly, a tawny-grey streak shot out from among the trees. The hawk would have caught him, had not another jay screamed a last-second warning. The intended victim dropped like a stone. He emerged from the brush, flustered and upset, and avoided that perch for the rest of the day.

The others took the canoe and went goose hunting and I wandered through the woods all day. The esker meandered through the spruce forest for many miles, broad, high and dry, open and park-like. The jack pines like its sandy soil, the birches love the space and light. A moose walking along the esker had used a white spruce to rub the velvet off its antlers, leaving the tree in tatters. In some parts of Siberia, 10 to 15 per cent of all trees at the tree-line are destroyed by caribou, according to Soviet scientists.

Red squirrels chittered in the spruces and after some searching I found a midden, a three-foot-high pile of bracts and cone cores that is part garbage dump, part storage space, for within it the squirrels, who are compulsive hoarders, keep caches of food. Its owner was upset about my presence and reviled me, loud and shrill, its bushy tail twitching in rhythm with its scolding.

On drier, rockier ground, white spruces predominated; in moister regions black spruces took over. Shallow-rooted, many of the trees lay toppled, their decaying wood covered with lichens and mosses.

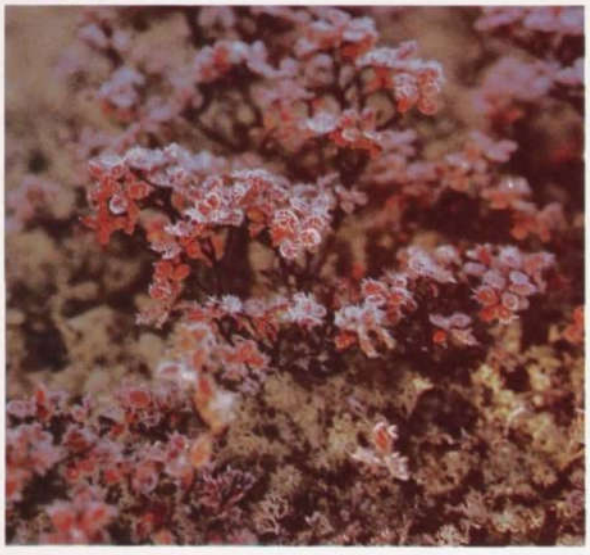
The brilliant red perithecia, the fruiting bodies of a Cladonia lichen called British Soldier, peeped out among the silvery-green caribou moss. Spruce grouse, superbly camouflaged in brown and black and beige, flew up suddenly and clattered through the trees. They settled on nearby branches, ruffled and smoothed their feathers, and clucked in wonder and amazement. Wherever there are hunters, their life span tends to be short.

I crossed a creek and came into an area ravaged by forest fire a few years ago; the charred spars of spruces were gaunt and dead. Now plants that like light sprouted from the scorched ground: small birches and willows, and a profusion of blueberries, their leaves scarlet against the fire-blackened earth. A fox had feasted here; its scats were berry-blue.

The hunters were late. I built a fire as a beacon and to make supper. The golden leaves of birches fluttered in the rising heat. A mink slithered between the rocks where we had filleted pike. Far away, a wolf howled, long-drawn and melancholy, rising on the last note and trailing off into silence. The night wind sighed gently through the spruces and loons called from the dark lake. ◆

Spruce grouse.

Bilberry leaves rimed with frost.



Oolachen Time in Bella Coola

BY GRANT THOMAS EDWARDS

The author, first pharmacist in Bella Coola, practises alone at Alexander Mackenzie Commemorative Pharmacy, Bella Coola General Hospital, United Church of Canada.

THE NEIGHBOURING PEOPLE of Kimsquit River, Dean River and Channel, Kwatna Bay, South Bentinck Arm, and Bella Coola River once lived in separate villages. The villagers of all but the latter abandoned their smokehouses three and four generations ago. Now, six hundred descendants of all those people reside together in Bella Coola, a village on the central coast of British Columbia.

Mountain goat, bear, venison, berries, barks, roots, shellfish, seal, and fish were the foods which were served in the firelight of smokehouses. Only salmon and oolachen still boast staple status. From the oolachen fish is extracted an oil. This 'oolachen grease' has enjoyed so much ceremony, medicinal power, household and culinary import, as to steal one's attention from the little fish whose flesh harbours it. In *The Bella Coola Indians,* T. F. McIlwraith tells how oolachen grease was served over the foods at potlatches and the Kusiut secret society dances, and how a Kusiut dancer 'throws on the flames some dyed cedar-bark, some undyed cedar-bark, a little eagle down, and some oolachen grease, saying "Please Xemxemalotta, accept this offering and be present," and throws his hands up in the air as if casting some object upwards.'

Scientists call oolachen *Thaleichthys Pacificus.* Its Bella Coola name is Sputc, and it has even been dubbed 'candlefish', for a dried oolachen will burn like a candle's wick. In late March or April the oolachen spawn in the rivers of the Pacific Northwest. An oolachen will spend two or three years in the Pacific before returning to its birth river to spawn.

Felicity Walkus of Bella Coola says 'They never had oolachens in the beginning here. They had to go all the way to the other side . . . out to Knight's Inlet or Kingcome or up north at the other bay of Kitimat (Kitlope). This couple that had twins took a male and female and they towed them from Kitlope next to Kitimat all the way to this place [250 miles by sea canoe]. That's when they just showed the oolachens the way to go to Bella Coola.'

One wonders how old Felicity's origin story is and how many generations of story-tellers have passed it down?

Willie Hans of Bella Coola, describing grease as a food, comments that it is 'just like butter for Indians. Just like bread doesn't taste good without butter, well, grease was something like that for the old people long ago.' Grease is still used as a condiment of seafood, dried meat, stew, potatoes, and it is used in the baking of bread and cakes. Excepting the winter months, the seasons were very kind to the Bella Coola food-gatherers. In the late winter dried foods and grease were relied upon for nourishment. After a bitter winter, oolachen time was a harbinger of bounty.

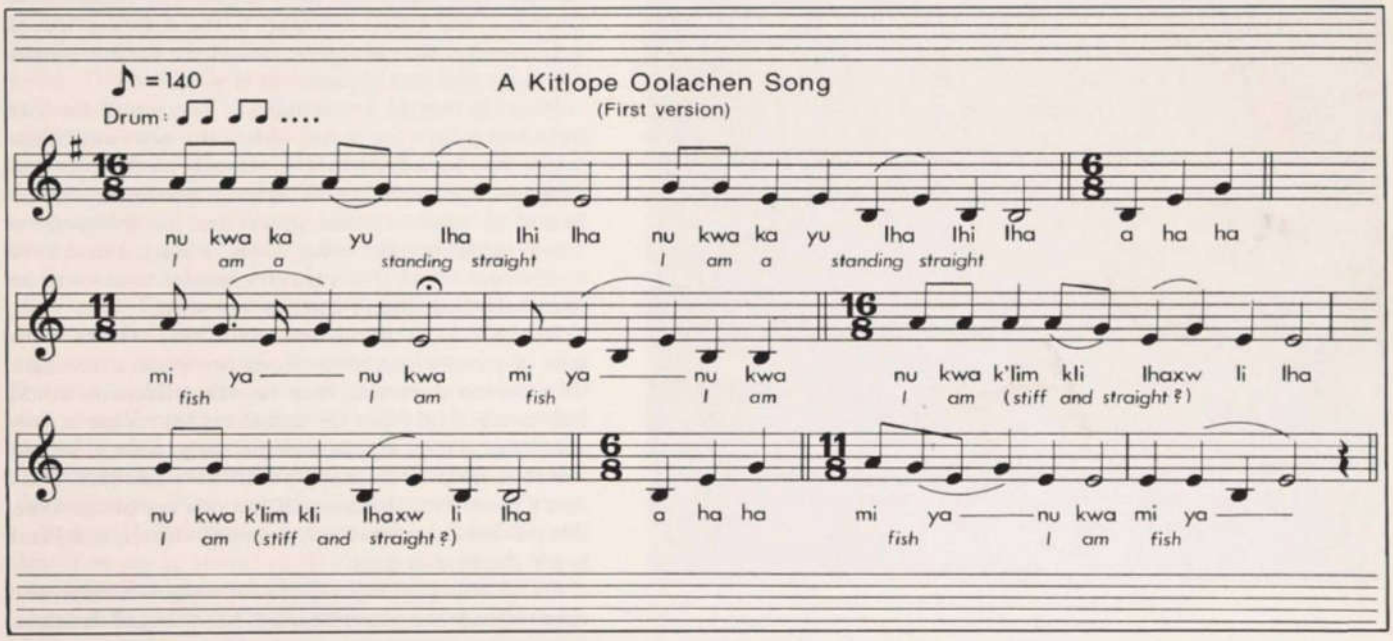
As a medicinal, oolachen grease is most commonly used as a preventative. If poisoning is suspected or a laxative is required then oolachen grease is administered. Its oilness has led to its use on dry skin, and the old midwives are said to have used it on their hands as a lubricant. One can see then that oolachen grease has filled the niches of folk medicine which have been served in other cultures by cod-liver oil, castor oil, lanolin, and petrolatum. Oolachen grease has also been used in combination with plant greens for poultices, and with tree pitches for topical and oral use.

According to Willie Hans of Bella Coola, oolachen oil saved his life. 'I was getting poisoned with water. Typhoid fever; drinking still water on the other side of river. My mother (Jessie Hans) used to sneak grease into the hospital in an old-fashioned cup. She make that grease warm, wrap it up with a towel, and put it in a paper bag. And when they come and visit me, they told me as soon as they open it to drink it really fast — you know — scared to get caught by the nurse or doctor. Every day she do that, and I guess that's the one that saved my life. Was one fellow had the same troubles I had . . . and that fellow die with it, with the same sickness. He was in the hospital with me too. He was same age as me. I was about nineteen.' Willie's folk treatment continued throughout a three-month convalescence at home and was stopped when his mother found he was 'getting okey'.

The purposes of linseed oil, Danish oil, and other woodworker's oils have been served by oolachen grease. Once carved, an implement such as a wooden spoon would be dipped into warmed grease and

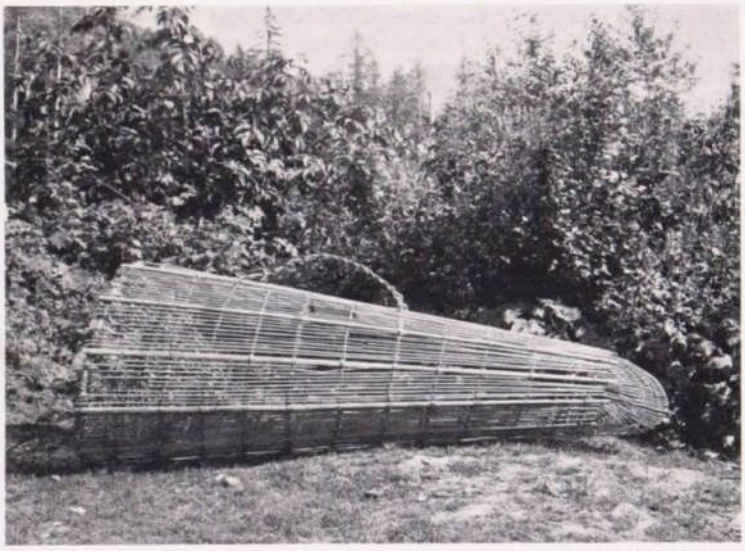
Recording 'A Kitlope Oolachen Song', May, 1978: Felicity Walkus (left), Agnes Edgar Sr, and the author.

British Columbia Provincial Museum

'A Kitlope Oolachen Song', as sung by Felicity Walkus and Agnes Edgar Sr. Music and lyrics transcribed by Linguist Henk F. Nater, University of Leiden, Holland. English translation by Clara Bolton of Kitimat.

♪ = 140
Drum: ♫ ♫ ....
A Kitlope Oolachen Song
(First version)
nu kwa ka yu lha lhi lha nu kwa ka yu lha lhi lha a ha ha
I am a standing straight I am a standing straight
mi ya — nu kwa mi ya — nu kwa nu kwa k'lim kli lhaxw li lha
fish I am fish I am I am (stiff and straight?)
nu kwa k'lim kli lhaxw li lha a ha ha mi ya — nu kwa mi ya —
I am (stiff and straight?) fish I am fish

Harvesting oolachen in 1936, are the late Charlie Nappie, left, Joe Edgar, and poleman Robert Andy. The 'spoon-canoe', hooked stick, and pole were cedar. Behind the fishermen are posts supporting another laden conical net.

Cliff Kopas



Side view of an oolachen net trap at Bella Coola, 1923. The traps of this period were made of cedar and at the end of the oolachen run, were stored away in dry places.

rubbed several times by its Bella Coola carpenter. Some Bella Coola masks, which were brought by the Phillip Jacobsen Expedition to Germany very nearly a century ago, still retain their sheen. The Bella Coola elders attribute their shininess to their carvers' use of oolachen grease. Margaret Siwallace fondly recalls one such physical application of grease:

'Even in that boat — dinghy — you could use that oolachen grease for it too. When it's new, not in the water yet, to waterproof it. George Anderson and Clayton Mack built a skiff. When it was done Clayton heated up some oolachen grease and just dumped the whole thing into the boat. Then he started to sort of use a brush to put it on the sides, inside. Afterwards he found the boat didn't leak. It was tight.'

In the village taboos pass with time. Hazel Hans tells of some which were strong two generations ago. 'If a person drowned, they say the oolachens would fade away. And when the oolachens first come in they said if we — any kid, boy or girl — go near, if we put our foot in the river, then we scare the oolachens. But I don't know now, because all the kids are in the river. They don't care. They run around [with dipnets] and catch their oolachens.'

Of all the physical aspects of oolachen time, the mode of capture of the little fish has changed the most. The cedar strip trap, and the conical net were employed originally. The trap was rolled into the river bed and tied to shore with a safety-line. Sometimes the fish were 'herded' by 'fences' into the wide mouth of the trap. When full, the trap was rolled to the beach and emptied through a small side door and its detachable tip, into the canoe.

Cliff Kopas

A 'stink box' of split 'cotton tree', on the north side of Bella Coola River (1936). The planking shielded the rotting oolachen from the sun. From left to right: Norman Thompson, Rosie Hans, Johnathan Wilson and Harry Schoones (both deceased), Gertie Schooner and her daughters Daisy Tallio and Mary Heathcote.

The conical net was once hand-made from stinging nettle fibre. White linen 'barber's twine' replaced the nettle string. This twine saved women many weeks of hand-spinning nettle string, but the oolachen could see the new string and it had to be dyed with alder or hemlock bark. The pattern of these nets remained the same. The narrow whip of the net was 18 feet long; its end was about one foot in diameter and the mouth had a fifteen-foot diameter. Two rings, attached to the mouth's rim, slipped over two vertical poles which were set into the river's bottom. A rope was attached from each ring to the tops of their respective poles, thus permitting raising and lowering of the net.

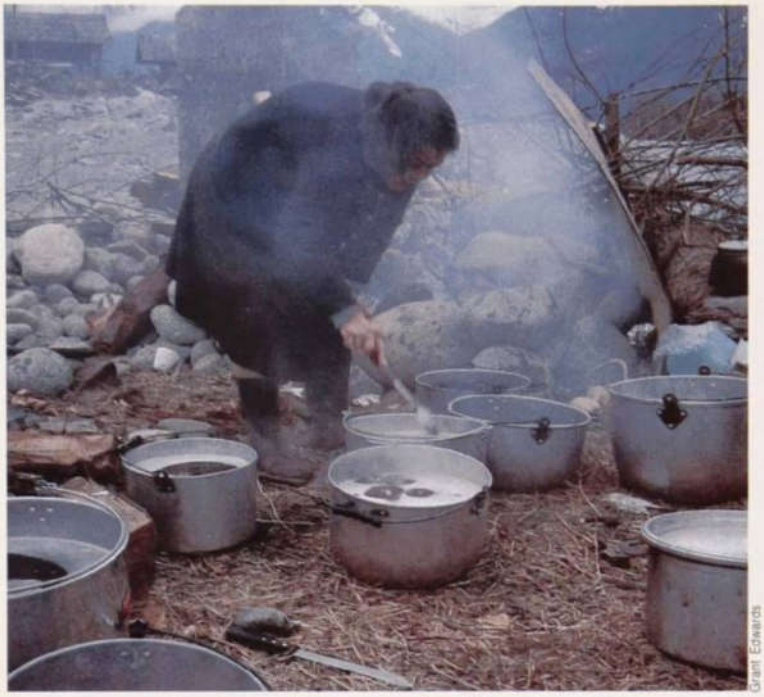
From their canoes, at night, the fisherman would set their nets. This involved inserting two end-notched sticks across the net's mouth to allow the net to swallow the oolachen. The ring ropes were then lowered, and the whip's end was folded over onto itself and tied off securely with a rope. Early next morning the whip of the net would be full of oolachen, and the fisherman would remove the spreading sticks and raise the ring ropes. Robert Andy describes such river work:

'It holds maybe three or four canoe loads from one net. You do it about all day long. It's about seven canoe loads a day or more. Start at five, work 'til dark, and put the net out again. We never came home for dinner, you know. Those old people make a little fire on the river bank where we put the fish and cook something like bannock. You put it in a frying pan and you put oolachen grease in it, two inches, boil it and turn the buns over a few minutes like.'

The 'grease-buns' were a pleasant interlude for the old fishermen. The children had their own favourite

Grant Edwards

Victor 'Skeena' Brown pitches a forkful of oolachen from Clayton Mack's twenty-ton bin into a wheelbarrow. Fourteen barrowfuls of oolachen were transferred to the steaming water of the cook box.



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Four hot rocks have been placed in each pot of grease; Addie Saunders skims the white foam. Seventeen gallons of grease is the yield of the fourteen wheelbarrows of oolachen caught by Skeena Brown, Addie's son-in-law.

treats. Rosie Hans and Daisy Tallio say that their fondest memories of oolachen time are of eating the skins of thimble-berry and salmon-berry shoots. According to Rosie 'when they're really tender, you just pull the skin off. When they made grease then you always hang around so you can get a chance to dip your skins in fresh grease.'

Today, motored river boats and seine nets are used to harvest the oolachen. The method of rendering oil from the fish has resisted such change. Bins by the river, called 'stink boxes', are filled with oolachen from the boats. The first stage of the rendering process involves leaving the fish to 'wait' in the boxes for one to two weeks. The waiting time decreases with increasing temperature. Stronger grease requires longer waiting, but the modern trend is inclined towards milder grease. Some elders used reddened eyes as a sign of the fish's readiness.

Beside the bin lies the cooking box, and when waiting is over cooking begins. Eight inches of river water are poured into the cook box, which today is lined with galvanized metal. Brick and clay separate the box's bottom from the fireplace beneath it. A strong fire is built in the fireplace and when the water is steaming hot, one 'cooking' of oolachen is transferred into it. Wash tubs of oolachen are slid along a plank which spans both boxes, or a wheelbarrow may be employed. The fire below the cooking box is quieted. The half-filled box is then covered with a wooden lid. The next two or three hours require a delicate titration by heat and bubbling. The cooker lifts the lid and inspects progress. A few bubbles here and there are expected, but if too many emerge in one spot, then a bucket of cold river water is poured into that place. The fire may require bolstering, calming, or shifting. Stirring is prohibited during this step, but the fish may be pressed down gently to set them closer to the bottom heat.

When the time is right, the fire is quieted, and the contents are stirred vigorously with a shaker until the fish is broken to a pulp. Pails of cold river water are then slowly poured into the corners of the box, until the mixture rises to within a few inches of the box's top. The box is covered again, and the mixture is left to stand for an hour or two. Oil seeps from the flesh and forms a perceptible layer of yellowish oolachen grease upon the surface.

A board the width of the box is lowered as far down as the grease has formed. The grease is then scooped out.

In the third stage the grease is boiled and skimmed. This is done in large metal pots, directly over pump stoves or open camp fires or it is 'stone-boiled' in pots or wooden boxes. The latter is the original method, and is still used. A hand-made tong (a four-foot cedar pole split down its middle and tied tightly at one end) is used to secure hot rocks from an open fireplace. The fist-sized rocks are dipped twice in clean water before immersion in the oolachen grease. Never more than four rocks are placed in a pot. By any method, the grease boils, and a white foam forms on the grease's surface. This is skimmed off and discarded. After the foam stops forming and the grease clarifies, the boiling is stopped, and the grease is strained into glass gallon jugs. In earlier times flour and sugar sacks were used to strain grease into earthenware crocks or five-gallon kerosene cans. Originally cedar baskets acted as sieves before grease was stored in cedar boxes.

Generally, the longer the fish waits and cooks, the better the grease. Waiting enhances the strength. Prolonged cooking achieves a perceptible 'ripe taste', and hasty cooking a 'raw taste'. The elders tend to prefer a strong ripe taste. Further, some prefer the 'burnt' taste afforded by stone boiling.

Oolachen, and more especially the grease, have always been articles of inter-tribal bartering. The Bella Bella Islanders, to our west, and the plateau people of Ulkatcho and Anahim, to our east, lack the oolachen resource. These neighbouring tribes trade their respective articles, pay money, or formerly in lieu of either, would cut hay or dig potatoes. Today a gallon of grease fetches its maker up to $85.

Originally the Bella Bellas paddled here in sea canoes. Abalone, seaweed, red cod, halibut, herring

When the oil has been scooped off, Skeena Brown (right) pulls the plug on Clayton Mack's cooking box. The sludge gushes down a six-foot trough into the Bella Coola River.

Grant Edwards

Grant Edwards

Eliza Saunders scoops grease from the cooking box with bread pans.

spawn, and racks of clams were their cargo. These foods were either sun-dried or smoked, but now may be presented fresh, frozen, or dried. In particular a four-gallon can of dried seaweed is traded 'straight across' for an equal amount of grease in the same container. After the introduction of petroleum-fuelled fishing boats, the method of the exchange of herring spawn and grease changed. Herring spawn, having been collected on hemlock bows, was loaded into a seine boat by the Bella Bella villagers, and the craft was sent forth to Bella Coola. Karen Edgar, of Bella Coola, recollects that the truck loads would come up from the wharf and then 'they'd just drive down to the corner and honk their horns, and everybody would run out and pick as much herring spawn as they wanted.' If, as a village, Bella Coola filled the same boat with fresh oolachen, the Bella Bellas would not be obliged to trade door to door in Bella Coola. Once the 'oolachen boat' returned home, the Bella Bella families would meet it with their empty pails and lard cans. That romantic village-scale exchange has faded but the trade is still carried out on an individual basis.

Before the latter half of the last century the Anahim and Ulkatcho people descended to sea level by foot for their annual bartering at Bella Coola. The adoption of horses since then made their excursions less arduous, and the Bella Coola recall these 'Interior Indians' coming in to trade by horse and wagon from the 1920s to the 1940s. Inevitably automobiles came into use after the completion of the Bella Coola road in 1955. The eastern articles of trade included smoked moose meat and fresh-water fish, soap berries, moccasins, gloves, and buckskin coats. In return smoked oolachen, oolachen grease, and smoked salmon were given. Recollecting how the grease was transported, Hazel Hans Sr of Bella Coola tells that 'They used these cans, four gallon cans, square ones. They used ropes to tie it so tight, so it wouldn't spill.' They would take it away on their wagons. The term 'Grease-Trail' aptly describes the mountainous pack trails which were used once the wagons were disbanded.

Having seen but four grease stations on the Bella Coola River last oolachen time, one wonders about the future of grease making. Margaret Siwallace says,

'Sorry for saying this. Young people are not interested in grease making. The young generation wants their own way too much, and besides it's a stink-work. I don't think it's actually a forgotten art. It's more laziness. More want to be just dressed nicely and walk around. Yet I noticed there's a few young persons have tried this year. I think it will still come back if they look at it the way I'm looking at it. The young generations think they don't eat grease, but I see them eat it all the time, any time, because I've got grandchildren in my household, and that's how I know this. They go for it. And the other thing — I'm kind of ashamed to say it — the white way of living is making us lazy. Women and men — not only the young generations, a lot of us is like that. They'd rather just go to the store and buy their grub.' ◆

Site of the former Hudson's Bay Company outpost on Agawa Bay, Lake Superior.

The Agawa Bay Outpost, Lake Superior

By Graham A. MacDonald

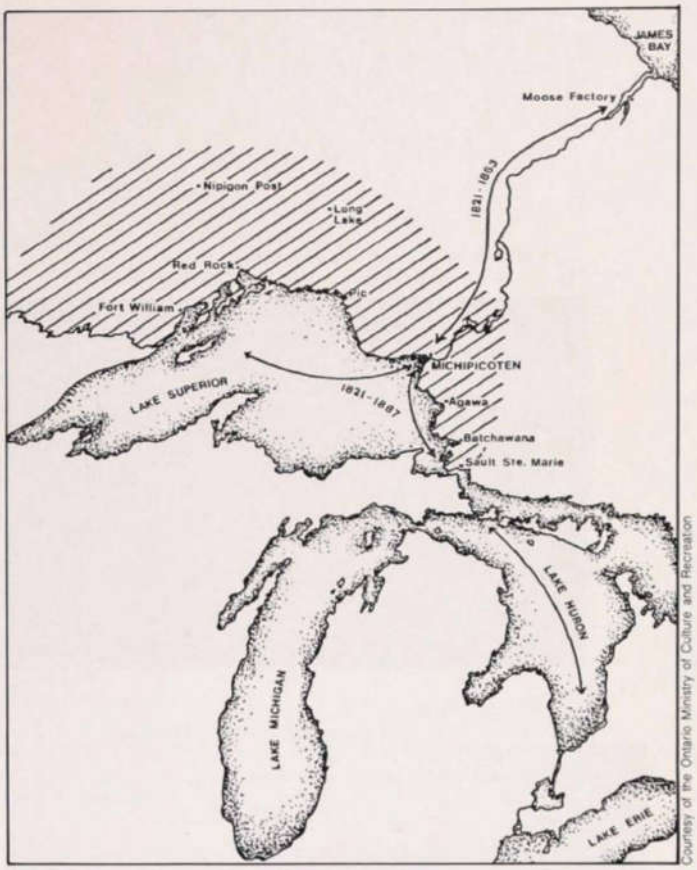
In 1973 Mr MacDonald, then an historian with the Ontario Parks Branch at Lake Superior Provincial Park, took part in an historical survey of the region which includes the Agawa post site. He is presently an historic park planner with Parks Canada, Prairie Region.

Permission of the Hudson's Bay Company to use quotations from its archives is gratefully acknowledged.

THE NAME 'AGAWA' immediately produces associations in the minds of those familiar with the east coast of Lake Superior. Travellers who have journeyed up the Algoma Central Railway will think of the impressive Agawa Canyon some seventy miles north of Sault Ste Marie. Others may recall Agawa Rock, a bold promontory overlooking Lake Superior which hosts one of the more dramatic displays of rock art in the Canadian Shield country. Sport fishermen who have pored over the writings of their early twentieth-century colleagues may recognize the lower Agawa River as the locale of 'Burnt Rock Pool', a beautiful and secluded haunt of the trout much praised by anglers. Agawa Bay is the name attached to a large crescent of shoreline, typical of those great panoramas of land and water which make the Trans-Canada Highway around Lake Superior so rewarding for the modern motorist.

There are other associations to be made with this bay and river, for Agawa has not been without its moments in the history of the fur trade. If these moments have been neither conspicuous nor long when compared with the hours in the sun passed by a Fort William or a York Factory, they are none the less interesting moments and from them can be learned something of what it was to partake in the life of a typical 'outpost'.

A host of place-names on the east coast of Superior have been left to us by the early French fur traders and by the voyageurs. Places with names such as Cape Gargantua and Cape Chaillon were favoured rest stops on the arduous Lake Superior route. The appeal of Agawa Bay was undoubtedly such as to make it a chosen resting place and stopover point as well. These spots would be especially preferred in the years after 1717 when the 'Postes du Nord' policy was initiated by the French leadership. This policy constituted the first effort to develop a string of posts from Lake Superior to the plains. Within this string of posts, one of the strong links was Michipicoten River, where a post was in operation from at least 1725. In 1739 we know that Beauharnois granted a 'congé de traite', or trading licence to Marin and Douville for purposes of prosecuting the trade at Michipicoten. This site has had a long and varied history in terms of its proprietorship, a number of rival posts having accumulated on occasion. Following the Seven Years' War, Michipicoten River was dominated by free traders, one of whom was Alexander Henry the Elder. In 1767 he was trading at Michipicoten and reported the existence of a post there 'of French establishment'. By 1783 the North West Company, of whom Henry was now a prominent member, had established itself at Michipicoten by means of an extension of the post which the Montreal men had established at Sault Ste Marie. In 1787 the Hudson's Bay Company erected a post across the river from the North West Company



Shaded areas of map indicate the Hudson's Bay Company's Lake Superior District; arrows show the trade-supply routes 1821-1887.

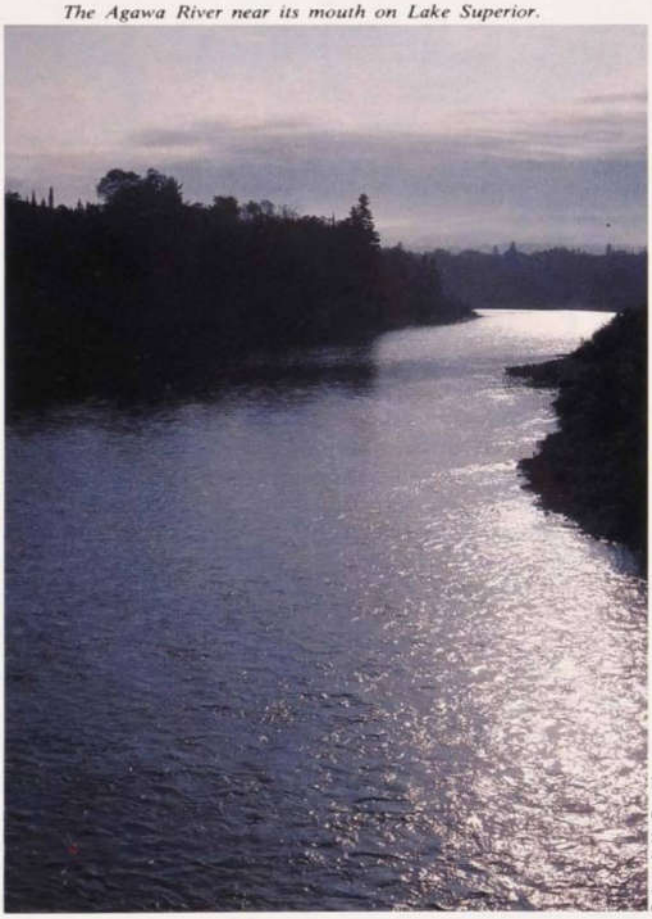
establishment. Thus the traditional approach of the Hudson's Bay Company, by which it established posts on rivers flowing into Hudson Bay, was now being altered in order to meet the increasing competition of those who established posts on the inland waterways.

It is not certain just when systematic trading commenced at Agawa Bay. There are no records from the French period which indicate that there was any kind of establishment there before the Conquest, nor has recent archaeology provided any such evidence. It is unlikely that any formal post existed in the 110-mile stretch between the Sault and Michipicoten until the mid-nineteenth century. By 1817 certainly, some of this middle ground was being organized by North West Company traders who had built a post at Batchawana Bay, their post at the Sault Ste Marie location having been put to the torch in the War of 1812. Following the amalgamation of the two major companies in 1821, the Sault post was revived, but an inspection of the administrative history of Michipicoten Post in the nineteenth century reveals that it was by far the more strategic of the two posts in the context of the fur trade. Sault Ste Marie, the natural focal point of the region, was destined to

An example of the native pictographic art on Agawa Rock, across Agawa Bay from the post site.

Graham A. MacDonald

The Agawa River near its mouth on Lake Superior.



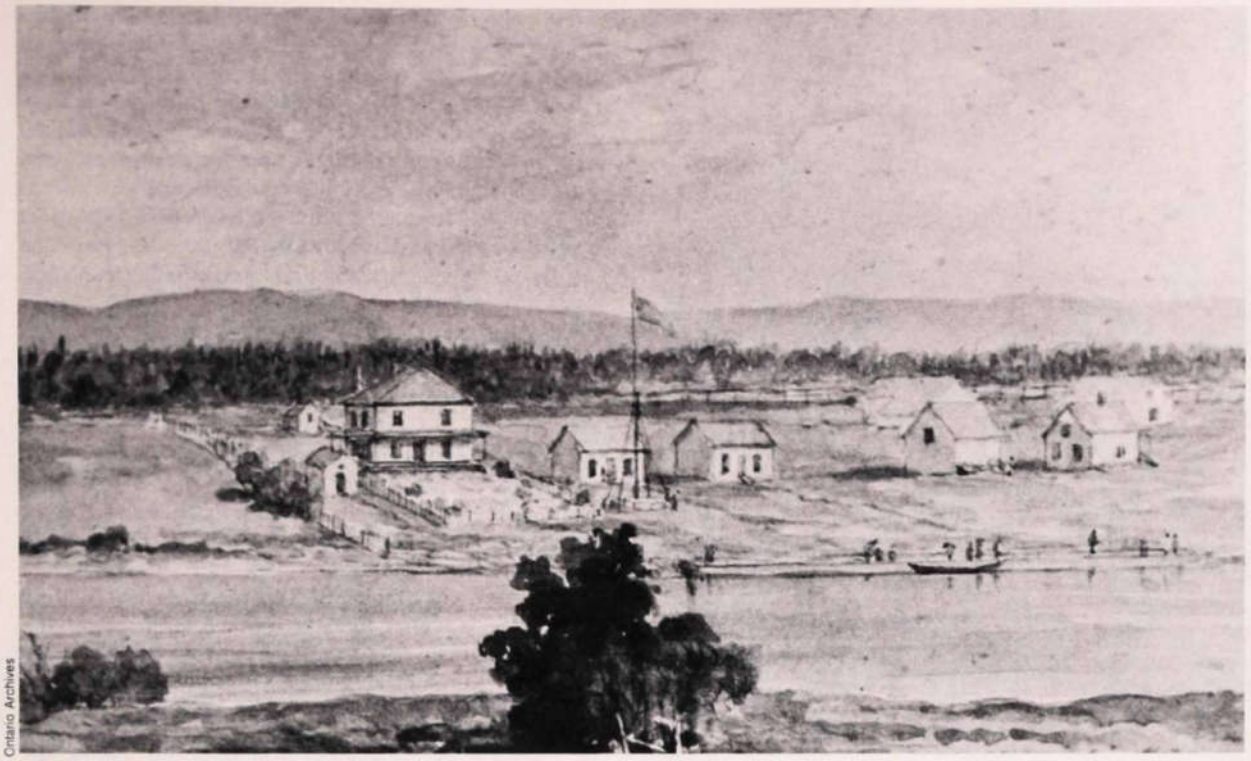
Graham A. MacDonald

decline as a fur-trade post earlier than the posts to the north and west, but to gain in importance as a transportation centre on the lumber and mining frontier. The importance of the Sault in the scheme of the frontier was evident by 1855 when the first American canal was constructed. Attention was focused on the riches of the Upper Michigan peninsula. The limited but satisfactory agricultural land bordering the St Mary's River corridor aided the development of an industrial psychology and helped reduce the importance of the fur trade as an industry based at the Sault. The Hudson's Bay Company had closed its doors at Sault Ste Marie by 1870.

The prime Shield country was not far north of the great St Mary's rapids at Sault Ste Marie. The fur supply in the Lake Superior country remained sufficient to allow Michipicoten to remain active as a post until 1904. The Chief Factor at Michipicoten traditionally had direct responsibility for the smaller outposts of the district, and these included the establishments at Batchawana and Agawa. The 'outposts' were those smaller, sometimes merely seasonal trade establishments, which served most directly the needs of the Company and of the native trapper in a given locality. Furs were assembled here and goods distributed, and then finally, the furs shipped to the district headquarters. In the case of Agawa Bay the headquarters was Michipicoten, some sixty miles north.

What do we know of Agawa Bay as an active outpost? The first notice of a Hudson's Bay Company presence at this location dates from 1836. At that time Michipicoten Post was the headquarters of the Lake Superior District of the Southern Department. Departmental headquarters was at Moose Factory at the other end of the Michipicoten-Moose River systems. In the minutes of the council meeting at Moose Factory for 1834 no mention was made of Agawa as a post of the district, but at the 1836 council meeting held at Michipicoten 'Agawang' post was listed and one James Robertson, postmaster, had been appointed to be in charge. It is not clear if the post operated in that season or in subsequent seasons down to 1857. James Robertson had been re-assigned to the New Brunswick area, north of Michipicoten. In 1857 minutes of council, 'Ogayon River' was mentioned and two men had been assigned to the post, one named Dubois. Correspondence indicates that Agawa remained active after that date although it would appear that such smaller outposts on the east coast did not enjoy perfect continuity from year to year. Chief Trader James Watt of Michipicoten, wrote to Sir George Simpson in February of 1858:

> From the Posts of Ogayon & Batchewana Bay I have heard nothing since Novr. last when, however, I am glad to say the Persons in charge informed me they were getting on in no worse than their usual way. Their usual way is but a poor one for neither of the Posts pays . . .



Ontario Archives

Michipicoten, a strategic post of the Lake Superior District, and headquarters for the Agawa and Batchawana outposts. From a painting by William Armstrong.

It is hinted here that the take of fur from the Lake Superior area in these years was not all that was hoped for. The idea that an area becomes trapped out or overworked is often mentioned in writings on the fur trade, although there is seldom much discussion of the dynamics of animal populations which have their own ecological patterns aside from those imposed upon them by fur trapping. The supply of beaver and other fur bearers was not a source of disappointment to George Keith, Chief Factor of Michipicoten in 1841. In that year he wrote to James Hargrave concerning his scepticism over the superiority of the Athabasca country relative to the Lake Superior District:

> The returns of the Northern Department eastward of the Mountains at least, were certainly anything but satisfactory, on account of the preponderance of interior Furs — the once flourishing and captivating Athabasca — is fallen low indeed! — spite of the nursing system — this part of country altho' hunted close summer and winter — holds out much better than your far west — Last year . . . this district mustered as many beaver nearly as it did in 1827.

Much of this take came from the areas drained by the Michipicoten, the Pukasaw, and Agawa River systems. Other accounts of the period suggest that the areas south of the Agawa in present day Algoma were seriously depleted of furs by 1840. Batchawana Bay did not enjoy a particularly good reputation as a fur-trade post amongst the officials of the Lake Superior District; on the other hand, few of the official returns have been examined for the period after 1836 which might reveal how the various posts in the Lake Superior District compared with each other. After 1865 there is some evidence to suggest that the returns from the Lake Superior District were being viewed less favourably.

An impressionistic picture of the trade at Agawa may none the less be drawn. Dubois was in charge at Agawa for some time after 1857. Correspondence dated at Michipicoten 6 February 1863 from J. MacKenzie stated that a large supply of beaver was on hand at Batchawana and 'Ogayou' posts. These two posts had apparently turned out some 1600 skins the previous year. MacKenzie noted a change however, for in the current year two or three small free traders from the Sault were working the area.

The 1860s correspondence suggests that Agawa was faring much better than Batchawana. Chief Factor Colin Rankin at Michipicoten reported in 1866 that the Indians were hunting near 'Ogayon' that winter. Later in the year he wrote 'Batchewana is doing but little in the way of collecting Furs'.

These observations are in keeping with certain institutional changes which had been initiated by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1863. In that year the Lake Superior District was transferred from the Southern Department to the Montreal Department. Michipicoten Post no longer reported to Moosonee

One of the few known photographs of the Agawa post; from H. A. Auer's 'The North Country' published 1906.

but to Montreal and it came to depend on the Lachine Depot for its supplies. In 1864 it was decided that Sault Ste Marie need not operate as a supply depot, but that Michipicoten would receive its trade goods and supplies direct by steamer. This signalled the end for the viability of Sault Ste Marie in the context of the fur trade and the post closed its doors in the late 1860s. The Sault and Batchawana had been losing ground as viable receivers of fur. Colin Rankin wrote to E. M. Hopkins in May of 1866 that it would be advisable to close Batchawana and leave the trade of Agawa.

By 1874 a definite fur shortage was perceived by Peter Bell, Chief Factor of Michipicoten:

> At "Ahguawa River" our Interpreter Dubois turned out merely a fair average with the exception of a slight increase in Martens and Minks: his section of the Country was once famed for Beaver alone; but since the decrease of that wonderful Animal his collection of them can only be counted by hundreds instead of by thousands as formerly . . .

Certain returns came to light in 1959 concerning the returns at 'Ahguawa' for the year 1876. These were recorded as follows:

5 Black Bear	100 Mink
112 Beaver	150 Muskrat
3 Fisher	13 Otter
1 Red Fox	3 Skunk
52 Martens	

The year 1879 took its toll of the local native population around Agawa. There is a cemetery there of some fifty persons oriented towards the mouth of the Montreal River, the powerful stream which empties into Lake Superior at the south end of Agawa Bay. Some of those in the cemetery may have been casualties of disease and starvation which according to some accounts reduced the local population by half. The post made a recovery, however, for Peter Bell reported in April of 1886 that 'Ahguawah River for a small post and wth. so few Indians always maintains its sway. The expenses are very trifling and the Indians clean their pelts admirably.'

The references to free traders trapping the Agawa Bay area in 1863 are revealing and indicative of a trend towards a new kind of structure in the fur trade. The American Fur Company, which had maintained a strong presence at the Michigan Sault until the 1840s, had sensed changes in the air and abandoned the Great Lakes country for the far West where more pristine frontiers were to be found. Free traders were more and more prevalent as the mining frontier drew workers into northern Michigan. Sir George Simpson had long feared the advance of the lumber frontier up the Ottawa Valley and into the Lake Timiskaming country. The Governor feared that every lumberjack represented a potential petty free trader. As the prospects of the Hudson's Bay Company declined after 1869, those of the small trader rose, and the passage of the Fish and Game Act in Ontario in 1895 was the legislative expression of the need to set general regulations for the independent harvester. The imposition of closed seasons and a registered trap-line system in the first decades of the twentieth century signified the end of the frontier.

Long before the development of the licensed trading system, the native peoples of the Shield had been in possession of a traditional form of trapping territory allotment and these were usually understood as family hunting territories. The emergence of this modification of an older and more communal approach of landholding has been the subject of enquiry for some time by anthropologists such as Frank G. Speck, but agreement on the historic character of this institution has not yet been achieved. In the Agawa Bay area, something of the manner in which the local natives divided the land is known for the period after 1880. Fairly large land units centred on the various watersheds and on any number of lakes came to be recognized as the home territory of specific Indian trappers. One of these Indians was a man of legendary proportions by the name of Tawabinissay or Tawab as he was more commonly known. Tawab apparently worked the area of land between the Batchawana River and Kawagama Lake. This good-natured man appears in the literature of Lake Superior on several occasions. Stewart Edward White in his book *The Forest* (1903) praised his ability as a stalker of game:

The Indian followed the animal's tracks as easily as you or I could have followed them over snow. He did this rapidly and certainly. Every once in awhile he would get down on all fours to sniff inquiringly at the crushed herbage. Always on rising to his feet he would give the results of his investigations.

"Ah-teek (caribou) one hour."

and later, "Ah-teek, half-hour",

or again, "Ah-teek, quarter-hour",

and finally, "Ah-teek, over nex'hill".

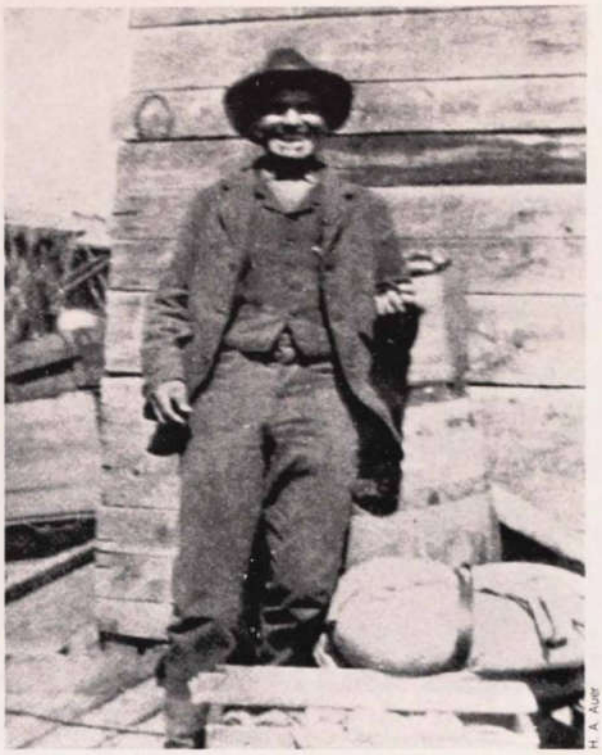
And it was so.

Tawab was probably reared in the Agawa Bay band which had been so seriously ravaged in 1879. (Regular contact with churchmen on the east coast meant that the Agawa group was exposed to some European literary training and accustomed to dealing with the life of trade.) Mary Bussineau in her *Agawa Bay Diary* reported in 1919 that Tawab had worked that area as a guide and trapper for the last twenty-two years. His name lives on in the place-name Lake Tawab near Black Beaver Lake in the canyon area of the Agawa River watershed.

The Agawa Bay post did not operate year in and year out as a fur-trade centre, but a small community was in place there after 1850 and as a community it was quite representative of the fur posts which clustered around the mouths of many northern rivers. Today the site of the old post and the associated cemetery lie within Lake Superior Provincial Park.

The buildings at Agawa Post had all disappeared by 1915. These had consisted of a store, a blacksmith shop, grocery store, storage room and house. Few photos have survived of the post: the illustration on page 42 appeared in H. A. Auer's *The North Country* (1906), and shows the outpost in what was probably its third version. The buildings were moved at least twice over the years in order to avoid undercutting by the spring flooding of the Agawa River. J. H. Rodier of Cleveland bought the property in 1924 and 'removed the half-buried logs and driftwood surrounding the place and levelled the old foundations where once the post buildings stood and otherwise improved the property.' The actual locations and surviving archaeological remains were recorded in 1973 as part of the Lake Superior Park archaeological survey.

The contemporary traveller around Lake Superior who takes time to seek out the shore of Agawa Bay must be content to imagine the former isolation of that spot. In summer the adjacent land is busy with campers and fishermen. Should he visit in the fall when visitors are few and when the colour of Algoma turns the hills into fire, some of the mystery and foreboding of that shoreline may still present itself. Across Agawa Bay from the post may be seen near two small islands, and the great sheer rock face which is Agawa Rock, a magnificent gallery of native pictographic art. It is there that many an Algonkian may have prayed in order to gain protection against



H. A. Auer

Tawabinissay, well-known Indian trapper of the Agawa Bay area in the early 1900s.

the unpredictable waters of Lake Superior. Many of those standing on the beach of Agawa Bay have reported sighting out over Lake Superior the mysterious 'ghost canoe', a vision perhaps reflective of the preoccupation with caution exercised by all who venture out onto the great lake. In the autumn especially, one is advised to beware of the sudden swell!

Slightly north of the old outpost the Agawa River slips quietly into Lake Superior. Where they join there are few signs that a lively coming-and-going in the fur trade was here a feature of the last half of the nineteenth century. The life of the Agawa post coincided with that last great period of the Hudson's Bay Company when the trade was conducted on lands subject to progressive public and private control. As an institution the outposts (as with many of the principal posts) often proved to be convenient stepping-stones into the twentieth century, becoming the initial face of communities which subsequently developed in response to the lumber and mining frontiers. A marginal community since the decline of the fur trade, Agawa Bay has nevertheless persisted and played a varied role in an environment noted for its harshness, and as a community of some permanence it was first given form by the Hudson's Bay Company. ◆

Manitoba Archives

James McKay.

'A WEARER OF MOCCASINS'

The Honourable James McKay of Deer Lodge

By N. Jaye Goossen

Ms Goossen was formerly historian, Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Department of Tourism. She is now communications officer with the Canadian International Grains Institute.

JAMES McKAY CUT a dramatic figure in the Red River Settlement of the mid-nineteenth century. The Earl of Southesk in 1857 singled him out as an impressive example of the Red River Métis:

> Immensely broad-chested and muscular, though not tall, he weighed eighteen stone; yet in spite of his stoutness he was exceedingly hardy and active, and a wonderful horseman.
>
> His face — somewhat Assyrian in type — is very handsome: short, delicate, aquiline nose; piercing dark grey eyes; long dark-brown hair, beard and moustaches; white, small regular teeth; skin tanned to red bronze from exposure to weather. He was dressed in Red River style — a blue cloth "capot" (hooded frock-coat) with brass buttons; red-and-black flannel shirt which served also for waistcoat; black belt round the waist; buff leather moccasins on his feet; trousers of brown and white striped home-made woollen stuff.

In many other ways, as in dress, he was 'Red River style', representative of a people who bridged the transition of the Northwest from migratory to settled, fur trading to agricultural, Indian to European society. At the same time, James McKay was exceptional in this category in his mastery of both worlds. Claiming Cree, Scottish, and French-Canadian ancestry and speaking French, English, Cree, Ojibway, and Sioux with facility, he was at ease at a Hudson's Bay Company outpost, in a Sioux camp, or in Government House in Fort Garry. If the cultural diversity of Red River was one of its most significant features, James McKay embodied that significance.

Yet while his massive size, incredible strength and multilingual multiracial heritage have made him an attractive subject for the romantic frontier mythology of Red River, little is actually known about the man.

James McKay was born at Fort Edmonton in 1828. He was the son of James McKay Sr, of Sutherlandshire, Scotland, an H B C steersman from 1816 to 1840, and Margaret Gladu, daughter of Charles Gladu and Margaret Ross. He was raised a Protestant but was converted to Catholicism at age 29 upon his marriage to Margaret Rowand. He had spent his early years in the strongly Métis Catholic frontier environment of Fort Edmonton; then he moved with his family between 1836 and 1840 to settle in the Scottish Presbyterian preserve of Kildonan, and possibly also to attend the Anglican Church School of St John's. This background equipped James McKay to bridge more than one cultural dichotomy in the colony.

Like many young mixed-bloods in Rupert's Land, James began his career in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was first hired into the service by Chief Factor John Black on 20 October 1853, at £45 per annum; he renewed his contract on 23 May 1856, at £75 per annum, but left the Company shortly after the completion of that second term. During those years the Company, and Sir George Simpson himself, grew to rely on McKay's knowledge of the fur-trade country and its people. After spending the first year on the St Paul to Red River transportation route, he was posted to the Swan River District, a region which had

Museum and Archives of Alberta

Ox-carts were frequently used on HBC routes when James McKay began his career with the Company. Above is the HBC transport on Smith Portage.

gained importance in the fur trade with the gradual settlement of the once-bountiful Red River District. As Postmaster of Qu'Appelle Lakes, 1854-55, Fort Ellice, 1855-58, and Fort Pelly, 1858-59, he assumed increasing responsibilities for the supervision of men and supplies. By the summer of 1859, his skills in transportation and administration had made him an asset to the Company's expansion, and he was given responsibility for the establishment of a trading post on the Shayenne River.

The move to increase trading activity in the Buffalo and Shayenne River region corresponded with a decision by the Company to use the Red River route instead of the Hudson Bay route for transporting furs and supplies in and out of Fort Garry. Improved overland rail transportation in the United States had been the main cause of increased economic activity in the St Paul region, and had been the prime factor in inducing Sir George Simpson and Sir Edward Ellice to recommend a combined ox-cart and steamboat system on the route. Because water levels did not always co-operate, overland arrangements had to be developed to complement and frequently to replace the Red River steamboat in which the Company had purchased an interest. James McKay, having already displayed considerable expertise on the route, assumed responsibility for the co-ordination of the network.

Manitoba Archives

Deer Lodge, the home of James and Margaret McKay. Mr McKay is seated in the buggy on the right, and holds a buggy whip.

Equally valuable to the Company and to the many independent travellers in Rupert's Land, was McKay's skill as a guide. His native knowledge of the territory both west and south of Red River enabled him to lead others accurately and swiftly through a maze of rivers and trails between the scattered pockets of settlement. Simpson came to rely on McKay as his personal guide, and even authorized McKay to make most of his travel arrangements in the West, providing him with dates and preferred mode of travel, and depending on him to see that all took place on schedule. When requests for travel assistance came to the Company from English gentlemen on both official and tourist expeditions, Simpson referred them to the 'experienced advice' of his personal guide.

James McKay's assistance was also sought by a variety of other men, two of the best known being Bishop David Anderson and Captain John Palliser. In Anderson's 1852 journal of his trip from Red River to Albany, he gave one of the first accounts of McKay's excellence as a guide, and praised the strength and ability of his 'personal attendant' on the journey. By the time John Palliser, during a stopover at Fort Ellice in 1857, requested Company permission for McKay to accompany his exploring expedition as interpreter and guide, his talents in those areas were well known. McKay guided Palliser from Fort Ellice to Fort Carlton, and returned with him that fall, having won the respect of the Captain and his team. According to Palliser 'Our friend Mr. McKay was on such intimate terms with us that I did not hesitate to include him in our councils'. It was apparently in deference to McKay's advice that Palliser decided to stop at Carlton rather than proceed westward in September 1857. Without the aid of men who were obviously well acquainted with the Northwest, monumental expeditions such as this would have been far more costly and difficult — if not virtually impossible.

The majority of James McKay's travel in this period was confined to the Red River route. The Earl of Southesk left a vivid description of the guide's efforts to lead a party of George Simpson, Dr John Rae and himself from St Paul to Red River in the autumn of 1859. He had nothing but praise for the energy and ingenuity of the man in transporting carts, oxen, people, and goods through the difficult terrain.

> Up to his waist or chest in the clinging mud or the sluggish black water of the creek, now passing heavy packages across, now dragging reluctant animals through the mire, all came alike to him, and his cheerfulness never flagged.

Evidently the flood plain of the Red River provided particular difficulty for overland travel on both the 'Plain Road' and the 'Crow Wing Trail', making the incredible strength of the huge man an indispensable asset. Typical of the legendary feats attributed to McKay is the incident in which he is reported to have

come upon a Red River cart stuck in the middle of a ford in the river. Its passengers, a newly-wed couple, were distraught and the bride in tears, because the more the pony struggled, the deeper sank the cartwheels. McKay, when he could control his laughter, 'waded into the ford, unhitched the pony, sent it on its way with a slap on the flank, and with no special effort pulled the cart out himself, with the couple in it and all.' Anecdotes such as this, whatever their measure of truth, are illustrative of yet another way in which McKay's frontier skills were a valuable commodity to the new wave of European settlement awkwardly trying to assert its authority over a land about which it knew little, and with which it was ill-equipped to cope.

With his resignation from the HBC, McKay's active life in the role of frontier fur trader and guide virtually ended, although the romantic aura of those years remained for most who knew him. His marriage, on 17 June 1859, to Margaret (Marguerite) Rowand, daughter of the late Chief Factor John Rowand Sr of Fort Edmonton, marked his entry into a new aspect of Red River society — at least in the eyes of some of the colony's prominent citizens. As Colin Inkster put it:

> The Rowands at that time were [reputed] to be the wealthiest family in H. B. Co. Service . . . through his marriage James McKay suddenly became one of the rich of Red River, along with this courtesy and gentlemanly bearing made him a leader with all classes . . .

His marriage certainly brought him access to Margaret Rowand's share of her father's £30,000 estate, the large tract of land on the Assiniboine known as Deer Lodge, where he and Margaret made their home, and a variety of family connections with a large portion of the old fur-trading families in the settlement. Certainly marriage introduced James to a new set of social circumstances, and if Colin Inkster's recollections can be taken as representative, the settlement was more than mildly interested in the way in which the 'celebrated frontiersman' adapted to his new situation.

In retrospect it seemed remarkable to Inkster that McKay could be as much at home in the lavish parlour of Deer Lodge as around a camp-fire on the Saskatchewan River. The image of McKay as the generous, hospitable, jocular but ever-gracious, member of the landed gentry, had its origin in these years. So did the reputation of Deer Lodge as a place which drew guests from far and near to partake of food, wine, and merriment. No doubt this legend has benefited from frequent retelling, but it is indicative of McKay's acceptance by the 'élite'. It would also have had the effect of making him more prominent in public life, and would thus have had some bearing on the active political and business career which began in these years.

Manitoba Archives

Mrs James McKay, daughter of Chief Factor John Rowand of Fort Edmonton. The Rowands were reputed to be the wealthiest family in HBC service.

As McKay moved into a variety of independent business ventures and offices in the emerging governments of Red River, his multi-cultural experiences, his knowledge of both native and immigrant peoples, and his practical skills of survival in the often hostile frontier, became even more significant. Gradually he came to occupy in more subtle ways, the same mediating role between peoples that he had previously occupied between Europeans and the unknown terrain they wished to travel.

One of the most fascinating aspects of McKay's life as a middleman on the frontier was his role in facilitating contacts between Indians and Europeans. Because he had mastered several Indian languages, and had, through considerable travel over the North-west, befriended a number of bands west of the Great Lakes, he became an influential and at times indispensable person in the early contact and treaty-making ventures.

The presence of James McKay as interpreter as well as guide to the Palliser expedition is an early testimony to that fact. Palliser and his men were acutely aware of the importance of establishing friendly relations with the Indians along their route. The strongest advocate of this approach was naturalist-geologist James Hector, who pleaded in his report that the Indians should not be regarded as 'so many wild beasts, the natural evils of a new country, which are in time to be

removed in the process of settlement.' In McKay, Hector found a kindred spirit. The two travelled and hunted together, while McKay aided Hector in his study of the Indian languages. Acting as interpreter for the party, he was able to translate some of their well-meaning overtures to the Sioux and Plains Cree. To what extent his own friendship with these peoples and his own belief in the need for good communication with them influenced Hector and Palliser towards that approach will never be known, but their evident respect for the 'intelligent half-breed' would suggest a measure of their debt.

One of McKay's most enduring Indian contacts, and one which proved significant to governments on both sides of the international boundary, was his friendship with the Sioux. The origins of this friendship are obscure. The Sioux had a tradition of enmity with the Métis of Red River, and may have obtained McKay's support during their early clashes with the more militant Métis with whom he does not appear to have identified. On the other hand, he may have befriended the Sioux in their own territory when (or before) establishing a Company post in the Buffalo-Shayenne River region. In either case the association seems to have been fairly well established by the time the Sioux — frustrated by broken treaty promises, reduced reserves, and a shortage of food — made peace with the Métis and the Cree, murdered a number of white settlers in the Minnesota Massacre or Sioux Uprising of 18 August 1862, and fled north into British territory. Relying on their long-standing alliance with the British in North America, the Sioux had come north seeking the protection of the British Crown in this crisis, and James McKay became an important spokesman for them in their petitions to the Crown in Red River.

The existence of this friendship must have been common knowledge in Red River as well as in the United States. When businessmen A. G. B. Bannatyne, John J. McKenzie, and others not identified, assisted the United States military in illegally abducting two Sioux men from Red River in 1864, they had to ply the Indians with liquor, laudanum and lies to prevent their visiting 'Jimmy McKoy':

> thus we escaped narrowly with our prey, for had they seen Mr. McKoy we would never have got them any further.

The Governor of Assiniboia, William Mactavish, taking advantage of McKay's relationship with the Sioux, called for his assistance when the Indians pressed for a reserve, and McKay was authorized to negotiate a three-year interim agreement in 1868 until a formal decision could be reached regarding the status of these American refugees. The Americans, too, were fully cognizant of this friendship, and in their desire for revenge after the hostilities, they kept a

Minnesota Historical Society

Shakopee (left) and Medicine Bottle, the two Sioux Indians who were abducted from the Red River Settlement in 1864.

careful watch on McKay. On 15 December 1869, for example, Alexander Begg recorded in his journal that

> James McKay who has gone to St. Jo is in danger of being captured by the Americans who have a warrant for him for complicity in the Sioux outbreak of 1862 and other times.

The Manitoba Sioux also knew their ally. Yearly the entire group of two hundred men and three hundred women and children, or their representatives, camped at Deer Lodge and went in McKay's company to petition for a satisfactory land grant. In 1873 they were given the right to remain in British territory, and in 1874 were granted a reserve on Lake Manitoba. When they rejected the reserve out of fear of their Saulteaux enemies, they were granted a reserve at the forks of the Assiniboine and Little Saskatchewan Rivers. This, too, proved unsatisfactory because of lack of wood and Chief White Eagle selected a parcel of land at Oak Creek, and Chief Mahpiyahdinape (Young Chief) at Bird Tail Creek. Throughout the several years of these negotiations, it was James McKay who presented the Sioux position to Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris, and Morris's replies to the Sioux. It was he, too, who defended the Manitoba Sioux against American accusations of murder along the border, and who facilitated a peace between the Sioux and Kee-ta-kay-pi-nais, the old hereditary chief of the Ojibwa Indians from Fort Frances. Throughout this difficult adjustment to a new territory, the Sioux could justifiably place confidence in the support of their friend, 'Jimichi.'

Thus it was that when Sitting Bull and his band fled to Canada in the winter of 1876-77, the Manitoba Sioux and their ally, James McKay, were once again

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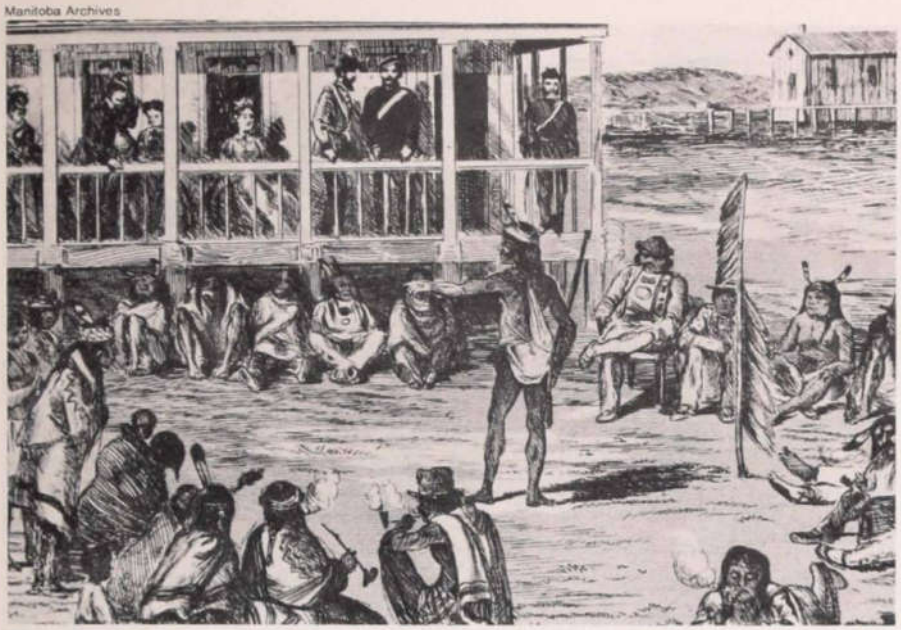

The signing of Treaty One at Lower Fort Garry. McKay worked for a number of years to have the 'outside promises' of this treaty committed to writing and agreed to by the bands.

the focus of concern. Fearing that the Manitoba Sioux would join Sitting Bull, and suspecting that they knew more of his plans than they would admit, Lieutenant-Governor Morris requested that McKay use his influence to keep them peaceful.

Although his communication with other Indian groups does not appear to have been as consistent or as close, McKay was apparently considered to have influence with native peoples throughout the North-west. He was thus an obvious candidate to assist the new governments of Manitoba and the Territories in their settlements with the Indian inhabitants of the new parts of Canada. Recognizing the significance of a strong Indian policy in allaying or at least coping with Indian fears concerning white settlement and its inevitable manifestations: the International Boundary Commission, the Dawson Road and the endless surveys, Morris desired the establishment of an Indian Board, composed of one resident Indian Commissioner who was 'a good businessman', and 'two Assistant Commissioners, natives of the country, familiar with Indian dialects and chosen from the ranks of the English and French Halfbreeds.'

> Such a man as for instance the Honble James McKay who has great influence with the Indian Tribes and who gives largely to them of his own means, having done so in one year alone to the extent of $1500, would be of great value in such a position . . .

The importance which Morris attached to the role of the Commissioner and the trust and friendship which he felt must be conveyed to the Indians were a measure of his esteem for McKay. Both he and Lieutenant-Governor Archibald before him had found the continual absence of Indian Commissioner Wemyss Simpson harmful in the execution of Indian policy, because, as Morris explained, 'The Government of Canada, succeed to the position of the H. B. Co. with the Indians, and the usage of easy access to the representatives of the Governing power which had continued for over a century cannot be broken up at once without danger.' In short, channels of communication had to be kept open and men like McKay would make this possible.

The Commission which was organized did not, however, include him. The Canadian government ignored Morris's plea for men who had experience in and understanding of, Indians, and instituted instead 'a Commission . . . to consist of [Morris] as Chief Commissioner, Russell [Lindsay Russell, Chief Surveyor from Ottawa] and another officer who must be a French Canadian . . . We think there must be a Catholic on the Board'. While representing several factions of Eastern Canada, it represented nothing of the Northwest. When Morris attempted to have two Métis, James McKay and John Norquay, added to the Commission, he was overruled by the Cabinet 'on the ground that the Commissioners should be our own officers and that there was no object in bringing non-officials into it.'

Unable to obtain an Indian Commission with special skills in negotiations with Indians, Morris expressed his disapproval to the board, and found a more satisfactory alternative. Refusing to negotiate treaties personally on the grounds that time and health would not permit him to handle the functions of Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Commissioner at the same time, he suggested that a special commissioner be

W. J. Christie, retired HBC factor, and member of the Indian Commission.

selected for the purpose of negotiation, and received authorization to send either McKay or Pascal Breland who was also noted for his relationship with the Indians. Thus it was that through the years of the western treaties, James McKay's contributions in negotiation and interpretation remained largely unofficial.

In many ways that unofficial status made his work more significant, since he could approach each side without bearing the insignia of the other. The success of his role as a middleman in the treaty period can be seen in several interesting incidents between 1871 and 1876, the most notable of which was the issue of 'outside promises' in Treaties One and Two. McKay, having witnessed the proceedings and actively assisted in bringing bands into these treaties, was one of the first to impress upon Lieutenant-Governor Archibald that

> It is impossible to be too particular in carring [sic] out the terms of the arrangements made with these people. They recollect with astonishing accuracy every stipulation made at the Treaty, and if we expect our relations with them to be of the kind which it is desirable to maintain we must fulfill our obligations with scrupulous fidelity.

At issue here was the fact that several items including uniforms and buggies for chiefs, braves and councillors, and domestic animals and agricultural equipment, had been promised the Indians but not included in the written treaty. McKay worked to have these 'outside promises' committed to writing and agreed to by the bands, a task which was continuing as late as 1876.

The completion of Treaty Three was also partly due to the efforts of McKay. Morris had twice failed to secure a treaty when he finally authorized McKay to go to the North West Angle and set up the meeting which eventually proved fruitful. The treaty, although formally negotiated by the Commission, was 'read and explained by the Honourable James McKay.'

Before the negotiation of Treaty Four, Morris recommended that McKay, who had already been sent with John Norquay to estimate the unrest of the Plains Cree, be authorized a commissioner. He argued with Alexander Mackenzie for the need to appoint a man of McKay's influence, and a man without HBC affiliation, to keep Company and government distinct in the minds of the Indians and everyone else. The warning went unheeded, and W. J. Christie, retired H B C factor, joined David Laird, Minister of the Interior, on the Commission. Ironically, when it came time to implement the treaty, and to settle claims of Yellow Quill and Kanoosis concerning reserves and payments, James McKay was called in to settle the disputes. Since the Indians coming to Fort Garry were in the habit of staying with McKay during their visits, he was in the best position to interpret the claims of these leaders to one another.

Finally, in 1875, when Morris repeated his recommendation, McKay was appointed a

Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris.

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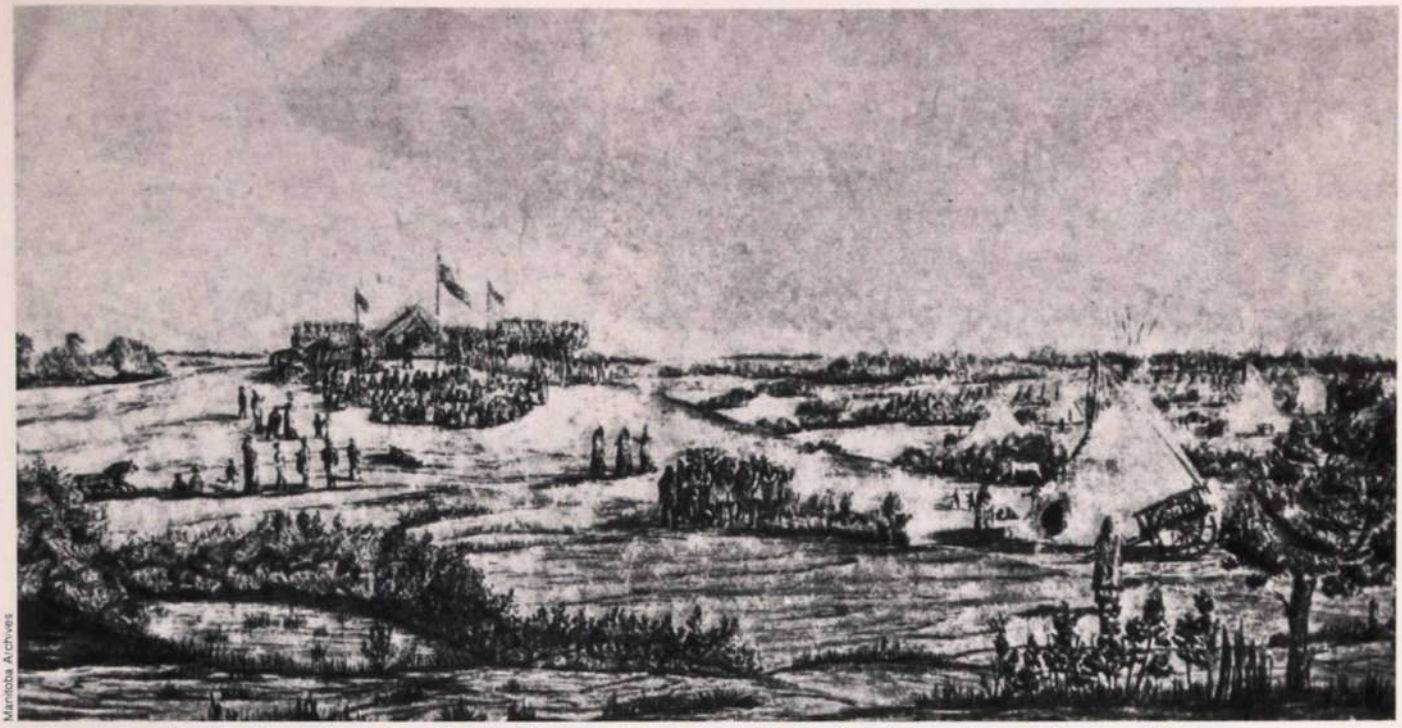

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The signing of Indian Treaty Six at Fort Carlton. From a painting by Frank Beiler, Secretary to Lieutenant-Governor Morris.

commissioner for the negotiation of Treaty Five, and accompanied the Lieutenant-Governor on the steamer *Colvile* to treat with the many small isolated bands along the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

Treaty Six, negotiated the following year by Commissioners McKay and Christie with the Cree, Saulteaux and Chipewyan of the Saskatchewan River country, drew more criticism from Ottawa than any previous treaty, and provides one of the few records of McKay's own justification for his work. Treaty Six differed from the previous five in that it offered a larger per-family land grant, larger grants for ammunition and twine, a medicine chest on each reserve, and a guarantee of food in time of pestilence and famine. This last clause drew the strongest opposition from the Minister of the Interior, who sent along the cabinet's objections that such a provision would encourage dependence and idleness.

In defending the treaty, McKay illustrated the existence of a genuine dynamic of negotiation in which each side had strengths and weaknesses. In reply to federal objections, he first pointed out the reasons for Canada's desiring a settlement at this time, reminding the Prime Minister and his cabinet that if they wanted to erect the buildings, telegraph lines and other physical evidences of an extended territorial jurisdiction, it was necessary to come to terms with the Indians immediately, rather than risk costly delays. He also argued that this treaty had been particularly difficult, containing as it did five different tribes — the Wood Cree, Plains Cree, Crees of the North, Chipewyan and Saulteaux — all of whom considered their country more valuable than any ceded before. Their belief that gold had been found on the Saskatchewan River only heightened this estimation. These people, he reminded the government, were also acutely aware of what went on in other parts of the country and the United States, and it was naive to expect that they should settle for less than was being offered elsewhere. In a pencilled margin note he cautioned that

> if the Indian tribes became aware of the Dominion Government being dissatisfied with the terms granted to them by the Comrs it will have a most disturbing influence and interpose serious obstacles to the completing of the Treaty & the making of the next payments. I believe that the express disapproval of the terms of the treaty will diminish the confidence of the Indians in the Government of the Queen in the Territory.

To McKay, these were not children to be trifled with, but independent people who deserved the respect due any party in serious territorial negotiation.

Camping with the Indians as was his wont, instead of in the accommodations provided the Commissioners at Fort Carlton, he was in a position to gain a much better appreciation of the Indians' concerns at the time of treaty. As he explained it:

> a Complete Terror has Seized the Indian mind, with respect to the probable extinction of the Buffalo on the plains, this animal being at present the mainstay of their existence.

In the event of such an occurrence coming to pass, and the Indians being struck down by some pestilence or other infectious disease such as smallpox, to whom then, under such distressing circumstances would the poor Indian family apply for relief but to the government they are under, as the poorer classes of the populations of other countries do in times of actual need, look for the support of their respective governments in such cases.

The Indians could not be expected to come off from the Reserves and devour their neighbour's Cattle.

The Indians' insistence on the inclusion of the clause relating to famine and pestilence, and the agreement of McKay and Christie that such a clause was fair and reasonable, suggest that both sides had a realistic appreciation of the few alternatives available on the plains by that time and that both were attempting to choose the alternative which would incur the least suffering. Only the federal government appears from its reaction to the matter, to have remained ignorant of the stakes and naively or callously unaware of the significance, the terms, or even the procedures of 'their Indian policy'. Ironically, it was men such as McKay, acting as a buffer and conducting the real work of negotiations, who made the perpetuation of such arrogance and ignorance possible in senior levels of government, and it was precisely this ignorance which very quickly destroyed whatever constructive alternatives the treaties might have effected.

During the critical years of Indian negotiations, McKay also held a variety of other public offices which called upon his knowledge of the physical frontier and its cultural complexity to facilitate the gradual extension of governmental organization in the Northwest. The first of these appointments as a Councillor of Assiniboia on 23 January 1868, might be seen as an aspect of Governor Mactavish's efforts to give the council a more representative membership and strengthen its popular support in the settlement, coming as it did after his recommendation for an election of councillors had been ignored. While the appointments of McKay and William Dease, another French-speaking Métis, might have been an effort to give representation to the increasingly vocal Métis, it did nothing to quiet the Canadian faction, and served, no doubt, to increase their hostility to the council.

James McKay's service as councillor was short-lived. He attended all meetings between 23 January 1868, and 28 January 1869, but was not present at the final three meetings before the Métis resistance. During his first meeting, the major point of discussion was the recent imprisonment and subsequent escape of John Christian Schultz, and it is interesting to note that he proposed the motion to uphold the judgment of the General Quarterly Court against Schultz. During his period on the council, he was also appointed President of the White Horse Plains District Court, upon the resignation of William Robert Smith, on 17 December 1868.

His activities in these offices reveal nothing, however, of his position in the growing factionalism of Red River. Although identified by the English Protestant sector as a French Catholic Métis, his Protestant Scottish heritage made him suspect to some of the French settlement. It would seem from his own actions and statements that he did not support Riel. On 19 October 1869, his freight train had been seized by Riel at St Norbert, and on 1 November, he

called on Gov. McTavish and offered my services to put down Riel's party at Standing River. He said that my services were not required just now. I asked him what was to be done that they were keeping back the Governor. He said that I had better remain at home and keep quiet.

Two days after a messenger came to my home from Gov. McTavish saying that if Gov. McDougall arrived during the night to be prepared to take him to the Lower Fort. I did not see Gov. McTavish afterwards till he left the country.

This, along with his arrest by Riel in March of 1870, indicates that he was opposed to Riel and prepared to support the legal transfer of authority. Yet his opposition to Schultz and his refusal to allow a party of armed Sioux to come to the aid of the Canadians indicate that he did not fall into that camp.

It would appear that his support rested with the Métis 'disposed to be independent of Riel'. The group of Auguste Nolin, Francis Nolin, and Jean Pierre Morin dit Perrault consulted with McKay on December 2, 3, and 4, after which he carried their list of claims to Lower Fort Garry for presentation to Colonel Dennis. Further testimony to this alliance are his long-standing friendship with Pascal Breland and possibly his well-known friendship with Bishop Taché.

Yet the same question might be asked of McKay that is often asked of Taché. Why did he choose to absent himself from the settlement from December to March at the height of the resistance? Perhaps he was simply attempting to protect his family from anticipated violence when he removed them to St Joseph that winter, but evidently the McKays had all returned to Red River before Riel fled at the arrival of the Wolseley Expedition. Perhaps the ambiguity of his position reflects the conflicting loyalties of his Scottish, French, and Indian ancestry.

It was his refusal to be associated with either extreme in the conflict which made him a suitable candidate for membership in the newly-established Manitoba government. He was appointed President of the Executive Council in the Clarke ministry on 10 January 1871, and in March was chosen Speaker of the Legislative Council, remaining in these official bodies through three successive governments. As President of the Executive Council, he remained in the brief Girard administration of 1874 and, although not initially included in the Davis government, he was sworn in a year later to serve as Minister of Agriculture in that government to its termination in October 1878, and in the administration of John Norquay until he resigned, 14 January 1879. In the Legislative Council he served as Speaker until the fall of the Girard

Angus and Jane, children of James and Margaret McKay.

Manitoba Archives

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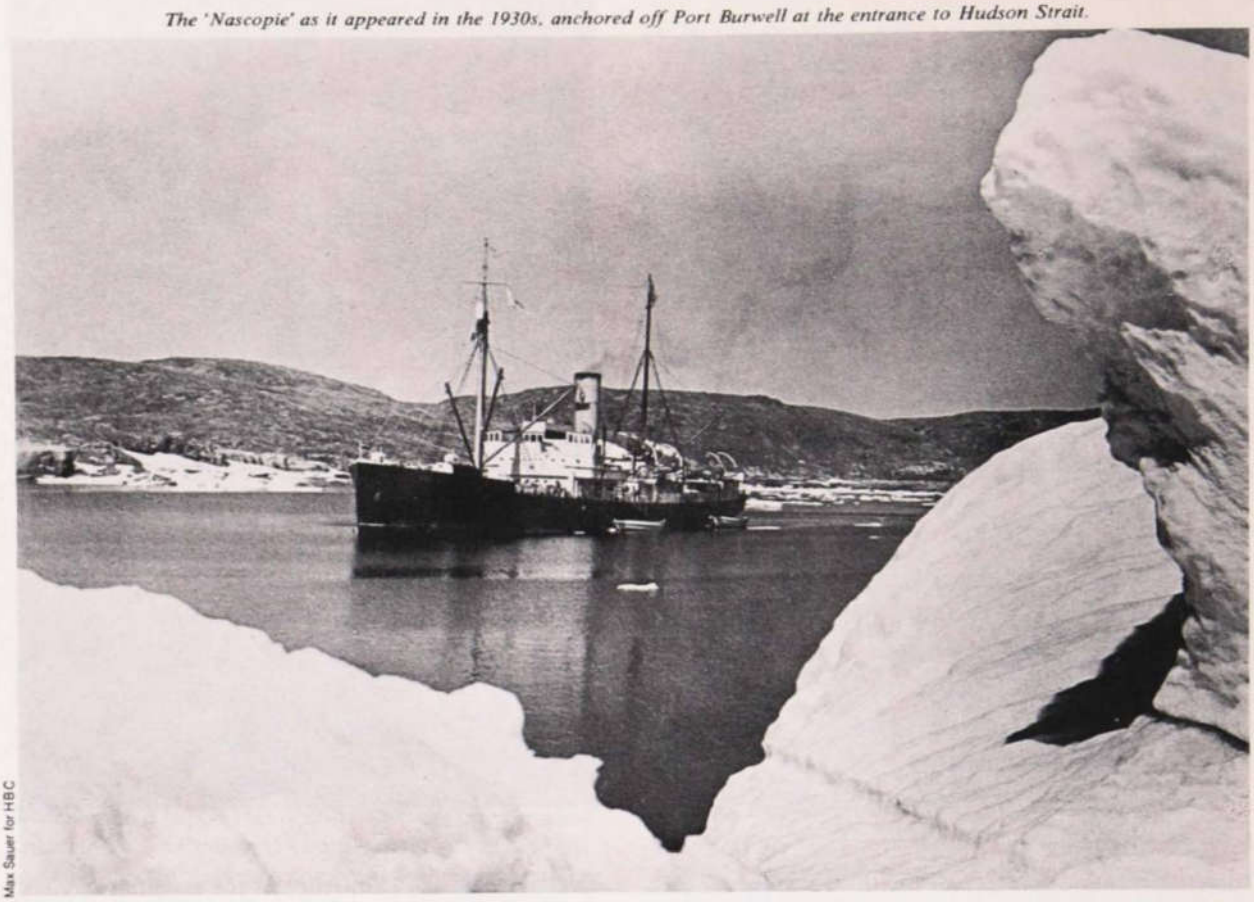
government, and was one of the three members who initially supported the move which finally abolished the Upper House in 1876.

Having indicated a willingness to vote himself out of that office, he was quickly appointed in 1874 to the North West Council created two years earlier to administer the territory between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains. Morris, in an effort to reinforce the council with men who would represent the anticipated character of immigration into the Northwest, would weaken the Company's influence and would give proper representation to the French and English mixed-blood population, supported the choice of James McKay above all others, this time successfully. His role in the council was largely that of advisor on Indian matters, and he chaired the committee which considered the regulation of the buffalo hunt, and recommended the establishment of a hunting season from June to December, a ban on the use of the pound and on the hunting of calves, the fixing of a uniform departure date for the hunt, and the provision of food to Indians during the restricted season. McKay remained in the council until its reorganization in 1876, providing, as Morris had hoped, 'his intimate knowledge of the Northwest'.

In his private business ventures, McKay also demonstrated his mastery of the problems of frontier existence and his knowledge of the essential services needed in the fledgling European community. After leaving the HBC in 1860, he established his own transportation business, and was eminently successful in providing a service so necessary to the widely scattered society. He continued to contract transport for the Company, but also provided a large part of the transportation of supplies required by the Government of Canada for surveyors, Indians, immigrants and officials, taking for granted his right to profit from the commercial enterprise while he was personally involved in the governmental decisions which made such enterprise necessary. During this most active period in his career, he went into partnership with the Irish-born, former Montreal resident, William F. Alloway, and together with a younger brother, Charles V. Alloway, they secured contracts to carry supplies to crews working on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He was thus part of a service which was inconspicuous but nevertheless instrumental in overcoming the major problem of frontier existence, the movement of supplies over incomprehensibly vast spaces.

McKay's sudden death at Deer Lodge on 2 December 1879, only nine months after his wife's death, marked the abrupt end to what had been an active and influential career, both in public and private concerns. ◆

The 'Nascopie' as it appeared in the 1930s, anchored off Port Burwell at the entrance to Hudson Strait.



Max Sauer for HBC

VARLEY AND SHORTT

Their Voyage on the 'Nascopie' in 1938

By Jeremy Brown

Mr Brown is managing editor of Pagurian Press, and author of a number of books including 'The Canadian Book of Lists'.

TERENCE SHORTT was 27 years old and a budding bird portraitist when he arranged for a three-month voyage on the ice-breaker *Nascopie* to the Hudson's Bay Company posts in the Eastern Arctic. He boarded the ship on 9 July 1938 — a muggy day in Montreal — and was the first man into what passed for a two-person stateroom on the legendary vessel. He waited nervously because he had been informed that his cabin mate was to be Frederick H. Varley, one of the founding members of the Group of Seven and widely recognized as one of Canada's outstanding and most exciting painters.

Shortt had hidden away all his water-colours and paper by the time the 58-year-old Varley strode in. Varley took one look at Shortt, buzzed for the steward, and ordered: 'Two doubles for two gents, please'.

It was an auspicious beginning, at least for Shortt, who fell into a firm and close relationship with Varley that carried well past the eventful trip. Winnipeg-born Shortt was then in the early stages of a remarkable career which led him, through his position at the Royal Ontario Museum, to many parts of the world, collecting specimens and sketching and painting many of the world's birds.

But Fred Varley — that giant of a painter — apparently knew nothing about painting in arctic

conditions. When his oils failed to dry in the cold, humid air, young Shortt timidly admitted that he was something of an artist, and in fact, had a good supply of brushes, paper, and water-colour paints, suitable for the northern climate.

Varley shifted his medium to water-colours and before the voyage ended, both artists were using every bit of paper they could lay hands on to record their impressions. The 11,000-mile voyage of the *Nascopie* afforded them an unusual opportunity for observing and sketching the arctic land and its people and wildlife.

In those years just prior to World War II, air travel to the Arctic was still a rare occurrence; except for two-way radio communication, the *Nascopie* was the sole link with the outside world. On her annual voyages the ice-breaker carried supplies, mail, and people to Hudson's Bay Company and RCMP posts along the shores of Baffin, Southampton and Ellesmere Islands, Ungava Bay, and parts of the coast of Hudson Bay. In addition to Company personnel, the passengers included members of the clergy and the police, and tourists. The Eastern Arctic Patrol was the official government party on board. In 1938 this group included an historian, physiographer, postmaster, doctor, special investigator (into possibilities of an arctic eiderdown industry) and 'T. M. Shortt, ornithologist' and 'F. H. Varley, artist'. The prime purpose of Shortt's participation was to collect birds for the Royal Ontario Museum. P. A. Taverner, the Dominion Ornithologist, later said that Shortt's collection was 'one of the finest so far brought out of the Arctic by one man in one year'.

Collecting specimens, while the major goal, none the less did not detract from the painting of these specimens.

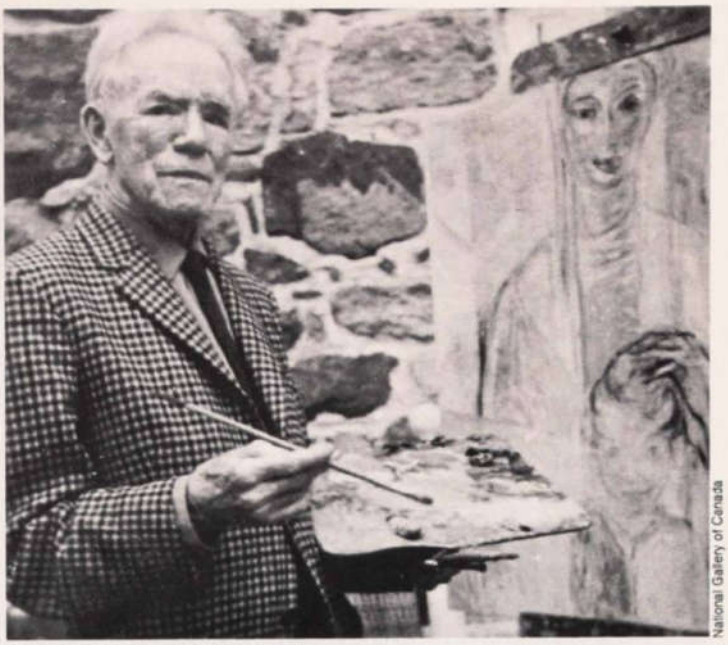
In 1976 Shortt and a friend were looking through some paintings from the voyage and discovered writing on the back of a portrait of a Rough-legged Hawk, painted on 30 July 1938. Shortt had taken notes during an evening when Varley had delivered a bluntly-worded lecture to the young painter:

'FHV's "compliment" on this one: Cease trying to be a flippin' scientist, lad; world's full of 'em. Needs artists. With a lot of hard work and a heaping measure of good luck, you might just make one.

'Then proceeded to give me a lesson on colour as if I didn't know blue from yellow — which I soon realized I didn't indeed. (Thought they came out of tubes, not from sun & lack of it; bounced light, complementaries, opaque highlights (you can't see bottoms on glarey water) transparent shadows, etc.) Protested I was drawing birds.'

Varley impatiently replied that the same rules applied to birds as to other objects:

'You can't *see* a bird unless light hits it and light, depending on its colour and angle of attack, *has to*



National Gallery of Canada

Frederick Varley (1881-1969) in later years.

affect, modify and influence local colour of the bloody bird's feathers. Try getting some purples, ochres, and complementaries into your shadows.

'For the next half hour made me tell him what colours I saw on objects, both their highlights and shadows and the in-between. At end admitted I was "seeing" far more colour in things than before, I'd just been *looking at* with eyes but not *seeing* with brains. Also was seeing a few violet and golden spots darting *before* eyes at end of session — Hudson Bay kicking up really rough.

'Another lesson tomorrow if ruddy sea doesn't lay us all out.'

So ended the first incredible lesson for Terence Shortt, but it was not to be the last. The two carried on a running dialogue for the entire trip. The artistic advice was reciprocal for, in addition to providing Varley with the suitable medium for arctic painting, Shortt showed the painter how to wear a sock over his hand and force the paint brush through the weave of the toe. This protected his hand from the cold and gave good control of the brush. In the intervals between stops, the two men took part in the unusual social life on board the *Nascopie*. Shortt recalls those evenings:

'Endless yarns could be told about the *Nascopie*'s "bullpen" a huge cabin in which the transient Bay traders, police and others bunked. Varley and I sat in on many 'parties' in the evenings. Tales were told: ribald, harrowing, sombre, heartbreaking and hilarious.

'So there was a strange mini-social life aboard, with some leaving to start a tour of duty and other talk-

Terence Shortt painting a pintail at Big Piskwanish, James Bay, July 1942.

hungry ones coming out on furlough. There was elation at breaking through an ice-field; there was illness, tragedy, vendettas and tall tales. The outside world was in limbo — it didn't exist. The immediate and important things were storms, fog and ice.

'We all realized that *Nascopie* was the mightiest ice-breaker in existence and that should we become ice-bound, which sometimes seemed imminent, no other ship in the world could come to her rescue. If *Nascopie* couldn't break out, no other vessel could break in! [Captain] Smellie and his *Nascopie* were on their own.'

On one occasion the *Nascopie* was fighting her way out to Lancaster Sound before new-forming ice could freeze her in for the winter. Her progress was slow, for she had to thrust into the pack and drive wedges into the solid mass. Sometimes she opened up a lead of 50 yards long; sometimes she gained only a dozen feet. On occasion a big piece of ice would break off, rumble along the ship's keel to lodge in the great seven-ton screw and stop it as effectively as an iron rod driven between the spokes of a wheel. The engines would stop, the whole frame would shudder and the lights would dim and flicker. Reversing the engines always dislodged the obstruction and the *Nascopie* would charge the ice-pack once more. Those on board were growing apprehensive and restless.

On that day, 2 September 1938, Mr Wilson, the purser, sought out Shortt. 'We're in need of some entertainment other than cribbage and grumbling' he said. 'Some of the passengers have been curious about your activities: going off with gun and binoculars at every post we've visited and on your return disappearing down to your cabin with a bagful of birds and things. How about giving them a talk on your work and about the animal life up here?'

Shortt agreed and mentioned it to Varley. On impulse he added 'Why don't we put on an art show?'

'Do you think they'd be interested' asked Varley, 'trappers, fur-traders, mounties, missionaries and seamen?'

'Of course they will.' Shortt, for one, had been overwhelmed by the power of Varley's sketches.

And so, the Varley-Shortt two-man show beyond the Arctic Circle was launched. The exhibition was a clothes-line art show. The men ran strings around the panelled walls of the saloon and used paper clips borrowed from the purser to hang up their sketches — like underwear on the line. There were five dozen or so Varley sketches and water-colours. One was his exquisite water-colour study of the mountain behind Arctic Bay on north Baffin Island.

'He was working on this when I returned from my reconnaissance of that area on August 28' Shortt recalls. 'As I came up to him it started to snow; great, soft, moisture-laden flakes floating with hasteless indolence, aviating like milkweed parachutes. Some were coming to repose on Varley's water-colour washes. I pulled off my Grenfell-cloth parka, slid my gun barrel through the armholes and held it over the painting.'

'Here' I said, 'This will make an umbrella to keep the snowflakes off till you've finished.'

'No! No!' he expostulated. 'Let them be. That's the way I want it.'

This sketch, owned by Mrs H. A. Dyde, is reproduced with her permission on the cover of this issue. It is unusual in that the artist wilfully allowed it to be water-marked by falling snow. In Shortt's opinion the effect adds immeasurably to the mood of the painting. Such was the prowess and awareness of Varley.

On exhibit, as well, were many of Varley's stunning pencil sketches of icebergs and mountain ranges, and of the Eskimo people: their dogs, tents, komatiks and kayaks. Shortt's contribution was about a score of portrait studies of birds in water-colour and a few sketches of seals, polar bear, walrus, caribou and musk-oxen. Varley, looking at Shortt's display, insisted that his sketch of a puffin was a self-portrait — in advertence to 'my ample nose'. Shortt also laid out a range of his specimens and gave a talk on arctic fauna.

Peregrine falcon, sketched by Terence Shortt at Fort Ross on Somerset Island, N.W.T., 1 September 1938.

After shooting the falcon Shortt had to retrieve it from the icy waters of Bellot Strait, where it had fallen about 100 yards from shore. No boat was available. Shortt climbed onto an ice pan (below, left) and, using his gun stock as a paddle, reached the bird. He was then dismayed to find that he was being pulled out to sea by the ebb tide and had to paddle furiously to regain the shore.

Terence Shortt

The ice pan which Shortt used to retrieve the Peregrine falcon. The 'stern' (right) is eaten away by the wash of paddling.

Anthropologist Edmund Carpenter records that after Varley returned from the Arctic 'he scattered his sketches with the indifference of an Eskimo artist, for whom art is a creative activity, not a product of that activity'. *(Canadian Art Magazine, Spring 1959).* Fortunately Carpenter was able to locate almost ninety of the drawings and paintings; thirty of which were reproduced in his book *Eskimo*, published in 1959.

Terence Shortt is a retiring man who would rather speak about birds than his own art. Yet in the past forty years his importance as an ornithologist and artist has spread around the world. By the time he had retired from the Royal Ontario Museum in May 1976 he had painted one-fifth of the world's birds; more than 1,600 colour portraits and studies from the High Arctic to the jungles of India and Africa. Now he is producing more paintings than he ever had time for in his capacity as chief display biologist of the Royal Ontario Museum.

In the past Shortt has illustrated books for other authors; now Pagurian Press of Toronto has undertaken to produce eight books written and illustrated by Shortt, to be published over the next few years. ◆

THE FATE OF FRANKLIN

By Roderic Owen. Hutchinson & Co., London, 1978. 471 pp., illus. $27.95.

Reviewed by L. H. Neatby

To publish another life of Franklin is a bold undertaking. The personality of that excellent but prosaic navigator does not lend itself to original treatment, while his adventurous career has been the theme of many good books, especially the official life of Franklin by H. D. Traill in the last century and the modern, excellent biography by G. F. Lamb. The publications of Richard Cyriax and F. R. Gibson forty years ago may be said to have exhausted the absorbing topic of his 'Fate'.

So Mr Owen's book is a pleasant surprise. He is a collateral descendant of the explorer and is versed in family tradition, as well as having access to written sources hitherto untapped; a large part of the text is made up of extracts from these and other better-known primary sources, arranged with coherence and lucidity. The correspondence of Franklin's first and second wives and of his niece, Sophia Cracroft, are largely drawn on. Writing with a verve of which Franklin was incapable and a partisanship of which he might have disapproved, these ladies impart a vitality and immediacy to the Franklin epic which earlier biographers have failed to achieve. However, the preponderance of family papers gives the narrative a bias which the author does little to correct. In consequence less than justice is done to Sir George Back, and much less than justice to Dr John Rae. The usually benign Mr Owen makes a snide comment on Back, who, whatever his faults, was a good comrade in a pinch and had saved Franklin's life on the Coppermine. One must not demand absolute objectivity from an author writing of his own family.

The historical background is well presented, but with minor faults of style and substance. The author's acquaintance with his sources, though wide, is in places superficial. One gets the impression that he wrote in haste and with little revision. He garbles a quotation from Samuel Johnson and spells his name 'Johnston.' If we are guided by his grammar instead of his obvious intent we would suppose that Dr Arnold, not Franklin, was appointed governor of Tasmania, and that Felix Booth sailed with the Rosses, instead of merely financing their voyage. The Tasmanian episode is wanting in clearness: the author implies but does not make plain the crowning insult offered Franklin by the Colonial Office, namely of so bungling the matter that Franklin's successor arrived in Tasmania before the governor had notice of the termination of his appointment. The account of Franklin's first journey is confused, as are references to Parry's arctic voyages.

Hasty composition is most evident in the latter half of the book dealing with the Franklin search. Mr Owen muddles the story of the *Investigator* and confuses the court martial which the Admiralty *refused* to grant Sherard Osborn with the one which actually sat to enquire into the loss of Belcher's ships. Quotations from sources are more numerous than well chosen. The vapourings of C. F. Hall are inserted, while no mention is made of F. R. Gibson's thorough and definitive statement of all that can be known of Franklin's fate published in *The Beaver,* June issue, 1937.

But these errors lie on the fringe and do not detract from the worth of a biography which, composed largely from family records, deals as much with the personalities of Franklin and his entourage, male and female, as with the history they helped to shape. Mr Owen, a writer of fiction, has given us a work as readable as a novel with no material deviation from historical fact. In substance he has given us a panorama that is correctly and brilliantly painted. He writes with delightful ease and fluency. He portrays his hero as justly as Franklin's somewhat prosaic character permits. He was a competent, pious naval officer, distinguished chiefly by a strong sense of duty and dogged courage, made great by circumstance. Though a good husband he was at his best on shipboard, where he made his piety more acceptable than in his domestic circle. He is depicted here with realism and sympathy.

Earlier in the century it was fashionable to deride Franklin as a blunderer. It is time that he was cordially recognised as having done for our arctic seaboard what Vancouver accomplished on our Pacific coast. On 16 August 1976, Mr Owen unveiled a plaque at Prudhoe Bay to commemorate its discovery on Franklin's second journey 150 years before. This book is a monument of more solid value. Criticism offered by the buffs will be far outweighed by enlightenment and enjoyment. The layman will read it with unalloyed pleasure.

Illustrations are first-rate. Barring one or two inaccuracies, the maps fully meet the requirements of the text.

Dr Neatby, retired professor of classics, University of Saskatchewan, is author of 'The Search for Franklin' and other volumes on arctic exploration.

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Chief Trader Paddy Gibson with the remains of seven members of the Franklin expedition discovered by the H B C search party on an islet in Douglas Bay, July 1931.

CANADIANS ON THE NILE
1882-1898

By Roy MacLaren. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1978. 206 pp., illus. $14.95.

Reviewed by Bruce Peel

Essentially the story of the reconquest of the Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian troops, the author has skilfully interjected the role of Canadian rivermen and steamboat captains, and the exploits of several individual Canadians, in the campaigns against the Mahdi and his successor, the Khalifa.

In August 1884, the Colonial Office telegraphed the Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, requesting voyageurs to work small boats carrying troops and supplies on the upper reaches of the Nile. On 15 September, a total of 386 voyageurs sailed from Quebec City; 159 were from the Ottawa area, 92 from Manitoba, others from Quebec and Ontario, and 56 were Caughnawaga Indians. A group from Winnipeg included a number of adventure seekers — young businessmen who were inexperienced in working rivers. In addition to voyageurs, eight wheelsmen were recruited, four from eastern Canada and four from Manitoba, to operate steamboats on the Nile. The Canadians, masters at steering boats through rough water, found one difference in navigating the Nile: unlike the clear rivers of the Canadian wilderness the Egyptian river carried silt making it impossible to see rocks and other submerged obstructions.

The voyageurs were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Charles Denison, a Toronto lawyer prominent in the Canadian militia. Their medical officer was Surgeon-Major J. L. H. Neilson of a well-known Quebec family, while their spiritual welfare was given into the charge of Father Arthur Bouchard, a former missionary in the Sudan. The paymaster was Lieutenant-Colonel William Nassau Kennedy of Winnipeg, whose monument may be seen today in London's Highgate Cemetery. In Britain, while the Canadian boatmen were being recruited and were voyaging to Alexandria, a veteran of the Red River Expedition, Colonel Sir William Butler, was busy overseeing the manufacture of 800 thirty-foot whaling boats, and their delivery to Egypt. In the campaign that followed the Canadian boatmen proved skilful in moving boats up the difficult cataracts of the upper Nile, and won the commendation of General Wolseley.

A dozen years later, when General Kitchener began the campaign to destroy the Dervishes as a power, he gave a French-Canadian engineer, Edouard Percy Cranwell Girouard, the responsibility of pushing a railway across the desert. Over the twin ribbons of steel troops and supplies were moved in quantity to the heart of the Sudan, thus assuring the defeat of the Khalifa and his followers at Omdurman. In an otherwise well-edited text, on pages 150-51, three erroneous dates relating to railway construction slipped by the proofreader; surely the years were 1896 and 1897. Another small point, Girouard's mother, Essie Cranwell, was the second, not the first of Désiré Girouard's three wives.

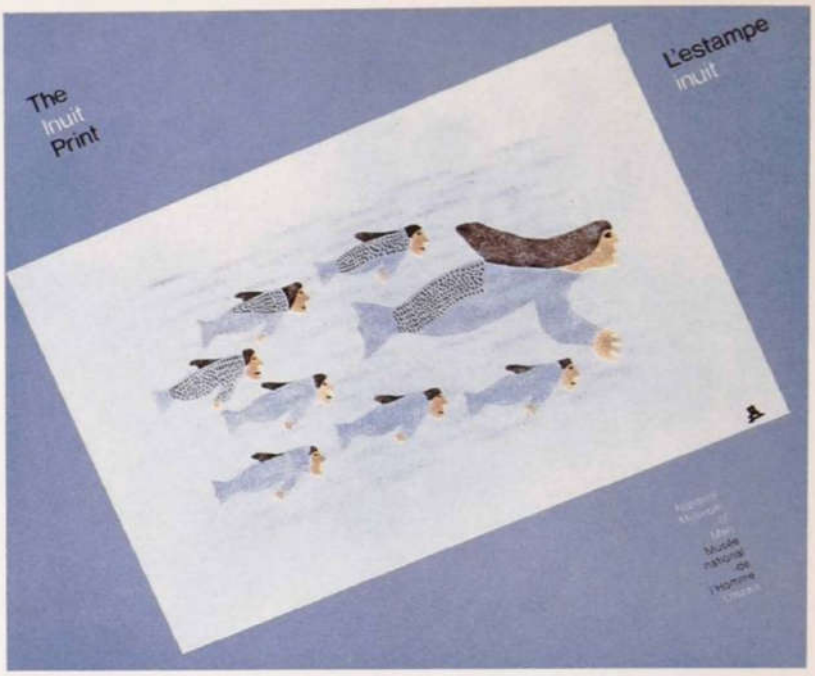
Since author MacLaren has written such a rattling good narrative of the adventures of Canadians abroad, it is niggling to suggest that the information on the four western wheelsmen is somewhat incomplete. The author's research was thorough as testified by an impressive bibliography, but one obscure source eluded him. He cannot be criticized for missing a Nile account serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* of Burlington, Iowa, 3 June to 4 July 1916. This was of a diary kept by Captain A. R. Russell recording his experiences in Egypt. On the basis of Russell's evidence, the Red River captains did not travel from England via Vienna and Trieste, but on the *Magdela* from Liverpool to Alexandria. A second point, at Alexandria only the sternwheeler *Water Lily* was assembled and launched, and Captain Robinson

placed in charge with Webber as his mate. The other steamboat, the *Lotus,* was assembled above Semneh, and turned over to Russell and his mate Segers, on 1 January. Russell describes graphically the difficulties of warping the *Lotus* up Ambrgall, Tangier, and Del Karber cataracts.

Six weeks prior to leaving for Egypt, Russell and Segers had been navigating the South Saskatchewan on a riverboat constructed by the same Clyde shipbuilder as built the *Lotus* and *Water Lily*. Both men were on board the *Lily* when she sank at Drowning Ford below Medicine Hat on 29 August. Three months after their discharge from service in Egypt, in the spring of 1885, the two captains were back on the Saskatchewan in command of two stern-wheelers. Downriver a leader who, like the Mahdi, was a man with messianic notions, had arisen among the Métis. Captains Russell and Segers were engaged in moving troops and war material in the campaign against Louis Riel.

Canadians on the Nile is a narrative history with a dash of the adventure and colour of stories of empire found in the old *Boys' Own Annual*. The author proves that some aspects of the history of Canada and Canadians are not dull.

Bruce Peel, Librarian to the University of Alberta, is author of a number of books including 'Steamboats on the Saskatchewan' and 'Early Printing in the Red River Settlement'.



THE INUIT PRINT

Published by the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, 1977. 267 pp., illus. $12.95.

Reviewed by R. Brownstone

Designed as a catalogue to accompany a travelling exhibition, *The Inuit Print* stands as a monument to the graphic art of the Eskimo. The book spans a period of twenty years and features the work of five print-making communities: Cape Dorset, Povungnituk, Holman Island, Baker Lake, and Pangnirtung. The text was written by Helga Goetz.

The task of selecting 155 prints out of thousands was not an easy one; never before has such a comprehensive retrospective been assembled. The pages glow with warmth and beauty. Many old favourites appear to delight the eye, and although some are missing, there are other fresher, if riskier, prints to compensate, as Anguhadluq's 'Hooks and Spears' (#138) and Ulayu's 'Surusiit Pingguatut' (#76). I do have some reservations: for instance the inclusion of two similar prints by Pudlo, Talirunili and Paperk. I also consider Kiakshuk's 'Summer Camp Scene' one of his lesser accomplishments. But these are minor points; the scope and depth of the collection is staggering.

In his introductory article, Dr William Taylor outlines the genesis of the Eskimo art phenomenon and of this collection in particular. Helga Goetz traces the antecedents of Eskimo print-making back 3,000 years. She relates the use of the incised line of prehistoric artifacts by men and the inlay and appliqué of skin clothing by women, to the making of prints. It is not surprising that the balance of male-female input has been maintained.

The prints are presented in community groupings, each preceded by an informative historical discourse. Additionally, each image carries a commentary detailing social observations and print lore. It makes fascinating reading. Did you know, for instance, that the background colour of 'Vision of Caribou, (#8) was applied by Lukta with an inked slab of whalebone; or that Anguhadluq's 'Hunting Caribou from Kayaks' (#141) was composed of four stonecuts and several stencils both spattered and brushed, and so complex that only 19 prints were pulled? I was also pleased to see mention made of the confusion of authorship of 'Woman Who Lived in the Sun' by Kenojuak and/or Johnniebo, her husband. Goetz rarely allows herself to make artistic judgments. However, in one instance where she did, I found myself in disagreement. I question her statement on page 79 that Kenojuak's 'Dream' shows a development towards later work; I find it is consistent with her earlier work, albeit more linear.

In my opinion the design of the catalogue is slightly at variance with its material. The prints themselves are an honest expression of a people struggling with the values of their past and our present, while the make-up of the book is somewhat obtrusive and commercial. The cover is in a decorator blue match-

ing a print which is angled on the page. Happily as a cover, this design does catch the eye. The treatment of the prints on the pages is somewhat misleading. The image size is given but not the page size, so that when you see the image in a grey background, surrounded by white, which in turn is framed with a blue line, you expect one of the spaces so defined to correspond with the print. Wrong — none of them does. The spatial relationship between image and page which the artist has established is of great importance, and I question the liberties taken in the name of design. On the other hand, the blue line around each print successfully contains and frames the print. The presentation of the book is handsome, but at a price.

If ever there was a question of the vitality and validity of Eskimo graphics, this book affirms the place of Eskimo art alongside the art of the ages. It also sets a standard by which all future print books will have to be measured.

R. Brownstone is director of The Innuit Gallery of Eskimo Art in Toronto.

FACES FROM HISTORY:
Canadian Profiles and Portraits

By George Woodcock. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1978. 254 pp., illus. $24.95.

Reviewed by F. Pannekoek

Glossy paper, numerous large pictures, superficial research, and a minimum of text — that is the deplorable formula of too many coffee-table scholars. The quick and expensive productions that flood the market, especially at Christmas, are too often as shallow as they are slick, offering little except snippets of insight to amuse the dilettante browser. Yet these books need not be superficial and a few are not. They can be at once thorough, insightful, and popular like Richard J. Huyda's *Camera in the Interior: 1858; the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition.* (Coach House Press, Toronto, 1975).

While Woodcock's offering pleases the senses, it starves the mind. This stems in part from the considerable confusion as to the purpose of the book. The dust jacket — and a very attractive one it is too — promises insightful 'refreshing' verbal portraits of one hundred and twenty members of the Canadian family. Much of the biographical content is, however, well worn and tends towards boring political chronology. Too often personal tidbits that bring the historically dead to life are omitted. The blindness of Sir George Simpson's last years, his treatment of his country children, his penchant for cold early-morning baths, and his probable death from tertiary syphilis, might have resurrected the historical corpse. John Sandfield Macdonald, a muddy figure at best, sinks in Woodcock's mire of Union politics. His aloofness, his stubborness, his difficult home life, his dislike for his son Henry whom he virtually disinherited, and his penchant for white gloves, might have put flesh on an otherwise emaciated portrait.

Woodcock's likes are clear. He prefers the rebel, the independently minded and successful men of the frontier. He has succumbed to the great-man interpretation of the Canadian past. William Van Horne, single-handed, engineers the C P R. Clifford Sifton makes Canada a multicultural country, James Morrow Walsh saves the West from Indian warfare in the 1870s, and James Douglas spares British Columbia for Canada. If Woodcock loves a winner, he hates losers and underachievers. A. Y. Jackson is chastized for failing to develop beyond his early Group of Seven phase, Edgar Dewdney is damned as a man who allowed himself to be emasculated by politics into an 'ineffectual sycophant' while Edward Blake is dismissed as 'the greatest has been of Canadian history'.

In fact Woodcock's assessment can be construed as un-Canadian. In this largely conservative organic society — and Canada is conservative — the individual cannot be understood except in the context of community and society. He can only be great who accepts the responsibilities of hierarchy, position, and talent. The unfettered individual and the rebel extolled by Woodcock and so common to the American experience, have little meaning for Canada. It was not Walsh who saved the West but Walsh and the North West Mounted Police, it was not Van Horne who built the railway but Van Horne and the navvies, and it was not Dumont who was the rebel but Dumont and the Métis. That Canada is an organic, hierarchical, and conservative society probably explains why historians have to date not focused so much on the individual as on the community. The successful promotion of the unfettered individual by George Woodcock, and lately Pierre Berton, is an indication of how far American republicanism and individualism has spread.

BOOKS

1. *History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870*
   By E. E. Rich. The definitive reference work on the first two hundred years of the Company's history. A three-volume, hardcover set. Published 1958; reprinted 1960. Volume I, 687 pp; Volumes II and III, 974 pp. Limited quantity. $35.00 per set.
2. *The Nonsuch:* By Laird Rankin
   The North American adventures of the *Nonsuch* replica, built in honour of the Company's 300th anniversary. Published 1974. 132 pp. Illustrated. $8.50.
3. *Hudson's Bay Company Catalogue: Autumn and Winter: 1910-1911.*
   A handsome reproduction of a rare H B C catalogue. Published 1977. 260 pp. $8.95.

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All in all the book is good fun and well worth picking up for the occasional browse. Since it will probably excite many to investigate their favourites further, the listing of the best biography of each character would have been useful.

Dr F. Pannekoek is Chief, Historic Research, Prairie Region, Parks Canada.

THE WORLD OF ROGER TORY PETERSON

By John C. Devlin and Grace Naismith. Optimum Publishing Co. Ltd., Montreal, 1977. 266 pp., illus. $14.95.

Reviewed by Clarence Tillenius

If any one name may be said to be a household word among the bird-watching fraternity around the world, it must surely be that of Roger Tory Peterson. From the time that the Peterson *Field Guide to the Birds* was first published in 1934, over two million copies have been sold; they are selling now at the rate of one hundred thousand a year. The 14-subject Peterson Field Guide series has travelled the world over and its sales are over four million copies.

Who, then, is Roger Tory Peterson and what is there in his book to elicit this amazing response? In this authorized biography, the authors, John C. Devlin and Grace Naismith, set out to tell us. And, after a fashion, they succeed.

The book is interesting because the subject is interesting. Almost devoid of style or great writing, it still gives a sufficient view of the visible facts of the Peterson career to ensure that the many millions who have become skilled bird-watchers through Peterson's method of identifying field marks will finally be able to satisfy their curiosity about the man who has been of such significance in their lives.

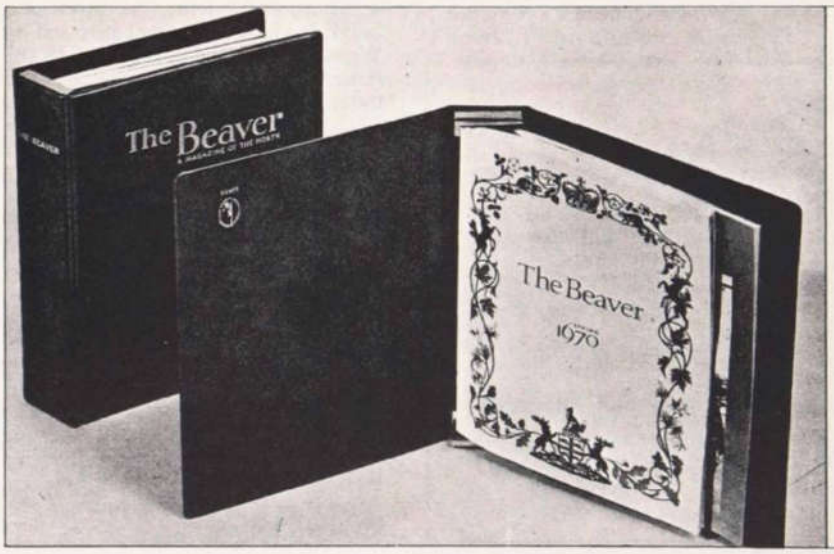
There are curious anomalies in this man's career. How can it be explained that a man so dedicated to precise observation, to unremitting study, to perfection in all he does, should have begun life almost as a junior delinquent? Curious, also, that Peterson's Swedish grandparents (his middle name, Anglicized to Tory for American ears, is actually the Swedish Tore — pronounced Tour-eh) should have come from the Swedish university town of Uppsala, the birthplace of the man regarded by most wildlife painters as *the* supreme wildlife painter of all time, Sweden's Bruno Liljefors.

Space does not permit cataloguing his far-ranging travels, his multi-faceted activities, but in this book one finds them listed more or less chronologically, together with pages of candid photographs from his childhood to the present, portraits of his wives, and his many naturalist colleagues. Moreover, beautifully reproduced in colour by courtesy of his print publisher Bob Lewin, are examples of his latest paintings to compare with work of an earlier day.

The core of his philosophy is perhaps best given in his own words: 'We are too close to ourselves, much of the time, to see our proper relation to the natural world on which we depend for survival. Watching birds and other animals seems to clarify my perspective; I see demonstrated the natural laws that regulate not only the lives of lesser creatures but also of men, for we are not apart from nature but a part of nature.'

Peterson has expressed concern about his status as a 'fine' artist, and there is often much discussion in wildlife circles about such evaluation. To this reviewer, himself a wildlife painter, the question has not much significance: posterity will inevitably decide. Certainly much is being perpetrated today — designated as 'fine' art — that may well cause posterity to cringe. Of more significance than whether any given work is art or not, is that to a whole generation the name Roger Tory Peterson is as familiar as their own. He provided the key to an enormous enrichment of life.

Clarence Tillenius is famous for his paintings, sketches and museum dioramas that portray Canadian animals in their natural habitat.



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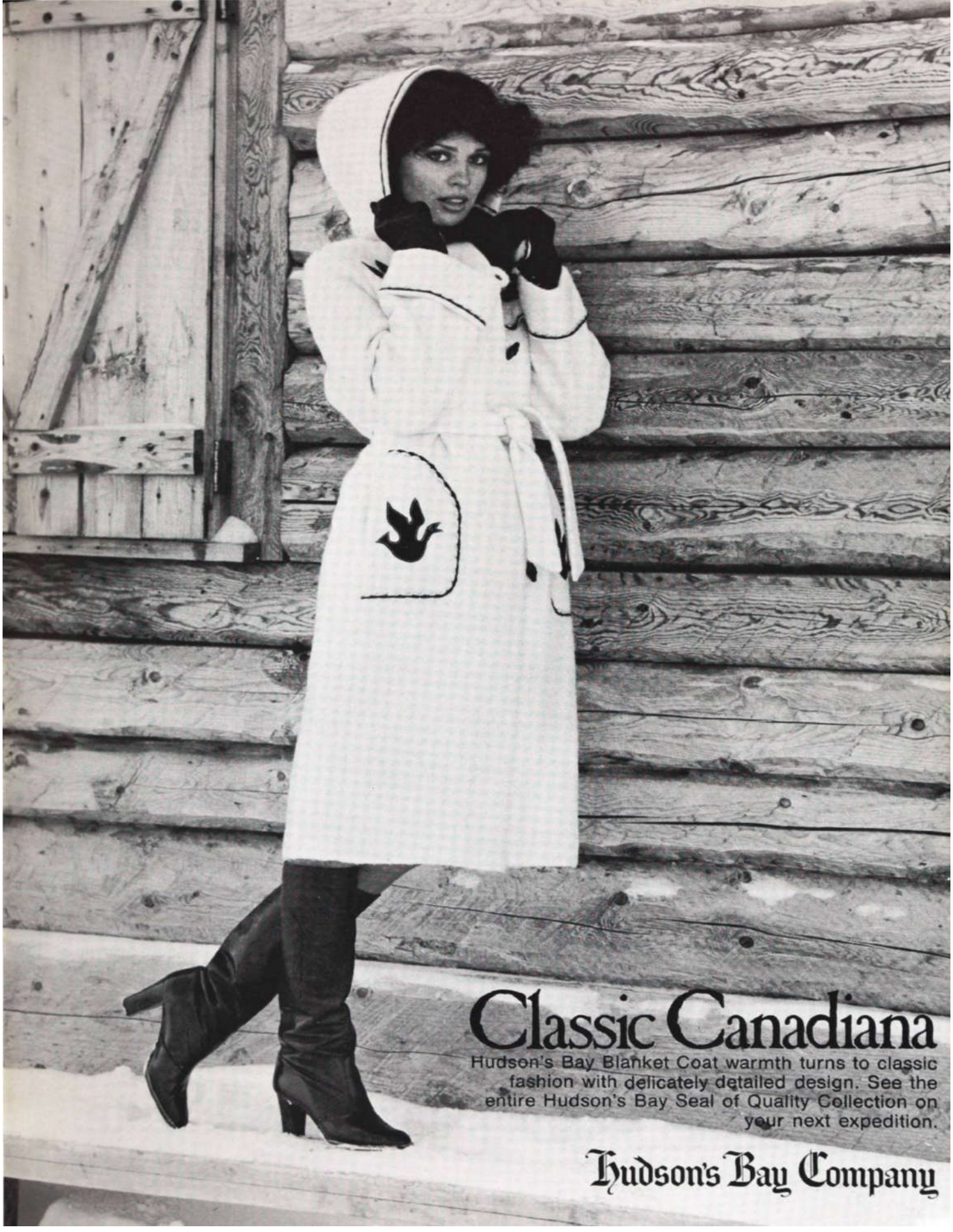
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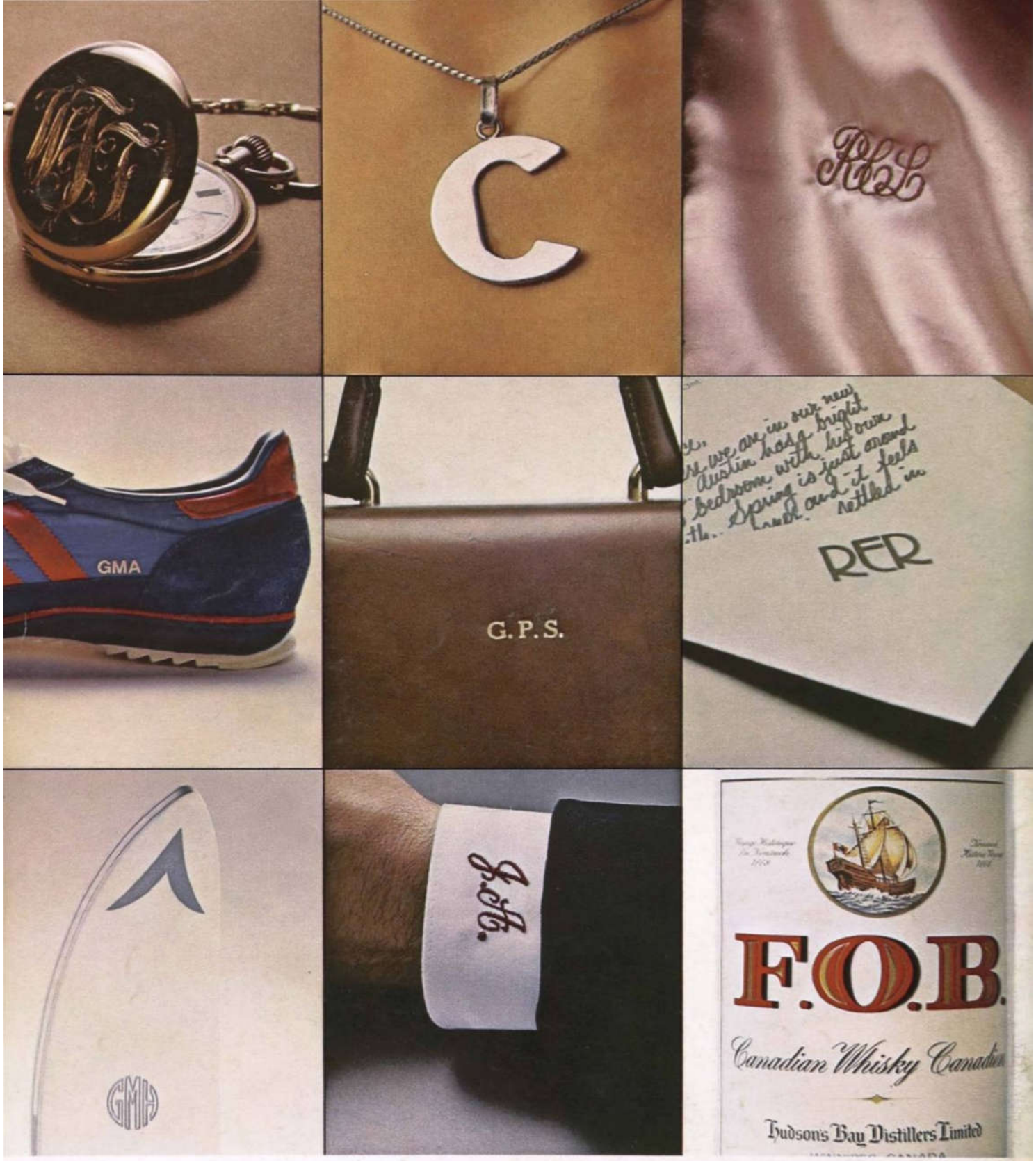

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